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# GODLY MEDITATIONS

UPON

# THE LORD'S SUPPER.

Hugh Davey Evans

# GODLY MEDITATIONS

UPON THE

MOST HOLY SACRAMENT

OF

# THE LORD'S SUPPER.

BY CHRISTOPHER SUTTON, D.D.

LATE PREBEND OF WESTMINSTER.

With a Preface by J. H. NEWMAN, B.D., Fellow of Oriel College, Oxford.

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# EDITOR'S PREFACE.

Little is known concerning the Author of the following Work, besides one or two of the principal dates connected with his life. He was a native of Hampshire, and born about 1565; and he came to Oxford in 1582, being entered as a commoner first at Hart Hall, and soon afterwards at Lincoln College, where he graduated in Arts. In 1587, before he was twenty-three, he was ordained and presented to the Vicarage of Raneham, in the county of Essex, which he resigned the next year for the Rectory of Caston, in his own county. After this he held the Rectory of Woodrising, in the county of Norfolk. At the end of 1612 he was preferred to that of Bromley, in Essex, which to-

gether with Cranworth, in Norfolk, which was afterwards given him, he held till his death. In 1605, King James, in consequence of his eloquence as a preacher, had made him a Prebendary of the Abbey Church of St. Peter's, Westminster. The only Sermon of which the memory is preserved, is one he delivered at the Funeral of Camden, the Antiquary, on which occasion, "he stept up into the pulpit," says Kennett, "and made a true, grave, and modest commemoration of his life." He died in May or June, 1629, and was buried in the Abbey Church, near the Vestry of the choir.

Besides the Work which is now presented to the reader, he wrote two small Treatises previously to it, under the titles of *Disce Vivere* and *Disce Mori*, as helps to the Christian how to live and how to die the life and death of the righteous. In the Dedication prefixed to the latter, he states, that "knowing his own weakness, he had not brought it out till over entreated by some special friends of his own University." These, as well as his "Godly Meditations," were popular books during the 17th

century. By 1677 the latter, as Anthony à Wood informs us, had reached thirteen editions.

As to the character of the Work itself little need be said, except that it is written in the devotional tone of Bishops Taylor and Ken, and other luminaries of the same period of our Church. It scarcely needs be added, that, the subject being what it is, its language is not adapted for every company, nor bears to be thrown in the way of persons taken at random. If any one be disposed to censure it as too glowing, or what may be called rapturous, let him rather consider whether his own estimate of its sacred subject itself be not inadequate. If the Holy Mysteries of the Eucharist be what the Church Catholic has ever considered them, they involve a condescension on the part of Almighty God which would be quite overwhelming, were it not withal so very gracious; and demand a return of exulting joy and grateful affection which cannot exceed, so that awe be present too. If in the language adopted by the Homilies, it be "the salve of immortality and sovereign preservative against

death," "a deifical communion," "the hope of the resurrection," "the food of immortality," "a heavenly refection," "an invisible meat," "a ghostly substance," surely no thoughts on our part can be too high for it. The words of an ancient Father, which the Homilies also cite, set before us both the doctrine and the feelings with which we should regard it. "When thou goest up to the reverend Communion, to be satisfied with spiritual meats, look up with faith upon the Holy Body and Blood of thy God, marvel with reverence, touch it with thy mind, receive it with the hand of thy heart, and take it fully with thy inward man." The fervour, then, of such meditations as the following, is no blame in him who wrote them, but in those who use them over boldly.

One caution must be added,—to beware of trying to work ourselves up, by a direct effort, into the feelings which are expressed in them. The Christian's reason will always, indeed, be able to assent to the very strongest terms which they contain; but he will often have to lament that from one cause or other, the state of mind

and body, the occurrences of the passing season, or even the accident of the moment, he is unable to realize them in his heart. Under these circumstances, he will be exposed to the temptation of stimulating his feelings into unison with them. Rather, miserable as it is to be cold in the full blaze of the sun, still let him submit to contemplate only with his reason, what ought, were he in a healthy state, to be the expression of his affections. Let him be content steadily to train himself in moral obedience day by day, and, as times go on, his mind will be gradually moulded not only to "love the things which God commandeth," but also to "desire that which He doth promise;" so that at length, by God's grace, perchance he will be able by a permanent affection and in his ordinary frame, and in spite more or less, nay altogether, of variations of body and estate, to live upon Him by love, as well as faith, on whom he has ever lived since his regeneration by a secret and spiritual union. In any other way he will gain but the shadow of what he seeks, instead of the substance. The attain-

ment of great things is slow; the mountain of the Lord is not to be ascended by a mere act of his will; nor can he turn into "the path of the just" near its "perfect day," instead of entering in at the strait gate. As only chastised and obedient souls gain the sight of heaven, so none but they are really filled with the love of it; and as mere argument and inquiry, which would fain anticipate religious knowledge, have no power to root conviction in us beyond the reach of change, so excited feelings which lead straight to religious enjoyment, are but as "fire among the thorns," giving a momentary blaze, then dying away for ever.

J. H. N.

OXFORD.
The Vigil of the Annunciation.

# THE EPISTLE DEDICATORY.

To the two virtuous and modest Gentlewomen, the now Lady Verney, and the Lady Rodney, sisters; sometime attending upon the late Queen in her Honourable Privy Chamber.

That desire you have, Right Virtuous, to serve God in holiness of life, and very towardly disposition, even from your tender years, so applicable to all goodness, (wherein may you wax old by the grace of God,) have often moved me to beseech Him, who hath begun this good in you, to continue the same, even unto an aged and happy end. For, assuredly our religious duties, and respective devotion to God, is worth all the world's dignity beside; nay, without this, all the dignity of the world is nothing worth. Is not godliness the flower of all our actions? Yes, verily; "Do but try me, saith the Lord, if I will not pour out a blessing."* Hath he

* Malachi iii. 10.

not said, "I will honour them that honour me ?* *Et diligentes me diligo ;* and "I love them that love me ?"†

To exercise this your devotionate duty unto God, so often (and therefore often) as you prepare yourselves unto the blessed Sacrament of the Lord's Supper, that high mystery of human salvation, I commend unto you both these Meditations hereafter followinig, in part gathered out of the ancient Fathers, and some late reverend writers of this age, as Luc. Penel, and others, translated, augmented, and brought to a method, I offer them (as a testimony of my due regard towards you) and present them unto your sober and gentle patronage, wherein what is performed, you may haply by observing find.

The occasion first moving me to gather somewhat tending to devotion upon this subject, I mean the true use of the most Holy Sacrament, was the necessity I found of some good means to stir up at times beseeming the best, and best disposed devotion of Christians, towards the high mystery they have in hand. Witty discourses in matters of controversy, now a long time no less learned than large, we have had in our English tongue, about the holy Eucharist: but all this while we have not much extant ap-

* 1 Sam. ii. 30. † Prov. viii. 17.

pertaining to the substance thereof, to wit, touching our Christian preparation unto the same, and our Christian participation of the same.

In the old law, the Levites must be first sanctified, and then they were to sanctify the people; the Priests prepared themselves, and others, to celebrate the old Passover; but unto this Passover every one withal prepares himself, for that every one hath a soul to save.

God saith to the same people of Israel, When your children shall say to you, *Quæ est ista religio?* "What meaneth this religion?* or what is this solemn observance we keep? you shall say unto them, "This is the Lord's Passover," &c. which as it had a memorial of a great deliverance past, so was it a most lively type and figure of the true Passover that was to come, wherein the blood of that most innocent Lamb of God that took away the sins of the world, was in love shed for the redemption of us all. And therefore of all in general may that of Hezekiah be well inferred, "The Lord be merciful unto them that prepare themselves hereunto,"† &c.

And to you both, Right Virtuous, I may properly apply the same in particular; the Lord

* Exodus xii. 26. † 2 Chron. xxx. 18, 19.

evermore be merciful unto you, in preparing your whole hearts to keep this Passover unto the Lord your God, who of his infinite mercy grant you a prosperous course of life for the time present, and for the time to come life everlasting.

Yours,

In all humble manner,

CHRISTOPHER SUTTON.

# AUTHOR'S PREFACE.

## TO THE CHRISTIAN READER.

In perusing the controversies of these our times, good Christian reader, with a mind desirous afterward to satisfy the moderate minded, on the contrary part in some questions, (wherein without question we are mistaken, and are not according to right, rightly understood;) in perusing, I say, these controversies, to speak a plain truth as in the sight of God, I found many of them on both sides so full of invective discourses, as I was then sorry to read, and am now loath to mention. But amongst other, entering into the controversy of the holy Eucharist, methought I was entered into a tempestuous sea of all contention, for there I saw most unnatural bitterness amongst Christians, schisms in the church, factions in commonwealths, all tossing and turmoiling about this sacred mystery, as is lamentable to consider.

2. I began at first to admire the patience of God, to

see this heavenly mystery of human salvation left unto the world, by Him who did redeem the world, as a seal of mercy, as a pledge of peace and love between God and man, to become, by the contentious humours of many, a very subject for all dissension.

3. At the beholding hereof might not the Prophet Jeremiah wish, did he live, that he had water enough, and that his head were even a fountain of tears?* Did the Son of God institute this most divine Ordinance to exercise our overrunning fantasies, and not rather to nourish and grace our poor redeemed souls?

4. In that Almighty God put enmity between the seed of the woman and the seed of the serpent we may gather, that as the seed of the woman should be at enmity with the seed of the serpeant, so should it be at unity with itself. We have enemies enough abroad in the world, though Christians be not at variance within themselves, and that which is most to be lamented, about some principal points of their Christian profession; but of all other about the sacred Institution of Christ their only Saviour and Redeemer, who left this his Ordinance, not to raise matter of contention, but to strengthen us in faith, and to continue a joyful remembrance of his love, in suffering and dying for the sins of the world, until the time of His second appearance or coming again in His glory.

There is a far better and safer course than to contend

* Jeremiah ix. 1.

any longer, if men would at last set themselves on all parts to follow it; which is to reverence the Son of God in the unsearchable mysteries of His wisdom which are past finding out; and not to stand weighing them in the light scales and balance of their own reason, to draw a veil over them, or say with the woman of Samaria, *Puteus est altus*, this well is deep, and so with pious hearts to reverence them, and no more ado.

5. When we have done striving, and even wearied ourselves in a thousand difficulties, brought our minds into a labyrinth of doubts, unless we will make controversies immortal, we must draw at last to an issue.

The faithful receive the blessed Sacrament; Well, what do they receive? Certainly Christ Jesus, truly and really; to make further scruple is needless curiosity; to give light credence hereunto, is in part incredulity. What the elements of bread and wine are in themselves, is one thing; that they are, being now consecrated to so holy a use, and received of the spiritually minded as the spiritual food of their souls, is another. What they are, I say, Christ's own words are sufficient warrant for a believing world unto the world's end. Wherefore, to be overwitted in seeking, or doubting how this should be, is no way agreeable to that faith and obedience that becometh Christians. *Rerum absentium* (saith an ancient Father) *præsens est fides; rerum impossibilium, possibilis est fides;* of things absent, faith is present; of things impossible, faith is

possible. *Panem vides, verbum audis ; Cui potius credis ? Sensui, vel Christo ?* Thou seest the bread, thou hearest the word ; to which rather dost thou give credit, whether to thy sense, or to Christ ? *Cui non potius gaudes ? Quid quæris ?* Why dost thou not rather rejoice ? Why dost thou question ?

6. In this case, that of the blessed Virgin, spoken of Christ at the Marriage at Cana, in Galilee, would be remembered ; *Quodcunque dixerit vobis, facite ;* Whatsoever he shall say unto you, do it.

When the serpent said unto Eve, *Cur præcepit vobis Deus, ut non comederetis ?* Why hath God commanded you not to eat ? had she answered, *Scio quod præcepit, non spectas ad me investigare causam quare præcepit ;* I know he hath commanded me so ; to seek a reason why, or the cause wherefore, I need not, I ought not. Had she not done far better ?

Some have faith, saith St. Augustine, in his 132d sermon *De tempore*, which have not art to defend it, or skill to show a reason thereof ; he which hath is not the faithfuller, but a little learneder. *Quomodo fieri potest ? accedite et percipietis.* How can this be ? draw near, and you shall perceive. *Accedite ad Deum, et illuminamini*, Draw near unto God, and be enlightened.

We have many things in Christianity offered as objects of our faith, wherein we must hold captive human reason. *Et Deus erat, et homo erat, et mater erat, et virgo erat*, There was a God and yet a man,

a mother and yet a virgin: that it is so we know it, how or after what manner this is brought to pass, know we cannot. Of those things which may be known, St. Bernard, speaking of the blessed Sacrament, *Ser. de Cœn. Dom. Mira sunt*, saith he, *quæ de Sacramento dicuntur: Fides est necessaria, scientia rationis supervacua, scientia ratione et intellectu colligitur, fides sola auctoritate inducitur;* Wonderful things are they which are spoken of the Sacrament: here faith is necessary, needless is the science of reason; this science is gathered by discourse and the understanding; faith is brought in by authority only. And going forward, he addeth, *Hæc sunt quæ expetunt simplicem creditorem, arguunt impium discussorem; credi oportet simpliciter, quod investigari non potest utiliter, nolite quærere quomodo fiat, nolite, &c.* These things require a humble believer, and not an ungodly discusser; that which curiously may not be sought may be believed with safety; seek not how this should be done, doubt not whether it be done or no. We have scope sufficient to exercise our Christian consideration, if we call to mind the ineffable wisdom and love of God, who, like a most provident Father, was not only content to provide costly benefits for his children, but hath also found out so behoveful a mean for their participation of the same, as in this holy mystery,

S. We will not ask our physician how it shall come to pass that this or that potion should do us good. And

should we be more busy when Christ himself doth minister so precious a receipt, so heavenly for the health of our souls? God forbid! There were of the Capernaites, men without faith in Christ, and love to Christ, who in murmuring manner said, *Quomodo potest.* How, or which way can he do this? It was a faithful and loving disciple that answered, *Tu Domine, habes verba vitæ*, Lord thou hast the words of life.*

10. The people, as we read in the Gospel, who were cured by our Saviour, came not unto Him to know or inquire by what means virtue should proceed from Him, it sufficed them to receive health, and, therefore, without more ado, they gave the glory unto God, who had shewed such mercy unto men.

11. There is both *docta ignorantia*, and *indocta scientia*, a learned ignorance, and an unlearned science; the one, when men keep themselves within the lists and limits of obedience and faith; the other, when they hearken to the Holy Ghost, be wise according to sobriety.

12. Was not the apostle's, *O altitudo!* O the depth! better than all the search of the world, in so unsearchable a mystery, where he made silence the safest eloquence.

13. Without all question, the Church of Rome hath erred in meddling too much with this sacred mystery, and troubling the world with a multitude of unprofitable and needless disputes about transubstantiation, and the

* John vi. 68.

like; for which, as for their half communion, let them shew their *accepimus a Domino*, as we have received from the Lord, or else we plainly tell them their plea is not sufficient in law, and will not hold for good.

14. Let the world, in the name of God, now judge of both, which give greater reverence to the most divine institution of the Son of God, whether they, who too busily talk of changing the substance of the elements into other, or they who here conceive more, and with more reverence, than words can express; they who say, μέγα μυστήριον, this is a great mystery; or they who labour to search out a power and virtue unsearchable.

In a word, they who will need set down a manner, how Christ is present in the Sacrament, or they who do acknowledge his presence there, after a manner inexplicable.

15. All this, while our due estimation of this so high a mystery is not yet fully understood (as I suppose) of many, who refuse our Christian assemblies in times beseeming. We honour the Passion of Christ our blessed Saviour, in this most holy ordinance, I trust, with as dutiful hearts as any Christians in the world. The heat of some fanciers we wish to be more temperate, and their zeal more according to knowledge, who ever love to be fishing in troublesome waters, and do their endeavour to cross antiquity, which was not ignorant of so many excellent things. In a word, we confess that all

the reverence and devotion a Christian heart can yield, is no way answerable to the depth and dignity hereof.

16. God said unto Moses, "Put off thy shoes, for the ground where thou standest is holy ground." How reverently we esteem of this sacred Institution, God knoweth, and what we hold, let men at the last seriously consider. The state of the controversy I leave in this discourse to discuss; matter of difference in opinion is often but an abatement of devotion; words appertaining to piety are sweeter than the honey or the honeycomb. Although for no other cause, yet for this I have collected out of the ancient writers, and in part out of Penella, the Meditations hereafter following.

17. To conclude then, it were to be wished, we had less contending in matters of controversy, which avail little to godliness, and more sincere following the actions of Christian piety, which are much decayed in these sinful times. We see it too apparently before our eyes, that we had less questioning in general, and in particular less curious prying into this sacred mystery, and more religious preparing ourselves to a due and dutiful participation of the same. We may consider, that after all the stir about it, the devotion of most is but so and so; for the heap of volumes that treat of this subject, how they all in a manner tend only to matter of contradiction. Wherefore, omitting matter of contradiction, beseech we God to increase in us reverence more and more toward this most holy ordinance of Christ

Jesus his Son, and our Saviour; and that preparing ourselves dutifully to receive him, in the state of grace, we may be received by him into the state of glory, to sit at his table, in his kingdom, to live with him, and reign with him. Amen.

# CONTENTS.


CHAPTER I.

Page

Of the first Institution of this most Holy Sacrament of the Lord's Supper ..... 33
The first Meditation upon this Blessed Institution ..... 36
The Fruit of this Meditation ..... 37
A Spiritual Soliloquy, or Meditation of the Soul with God upon these Meditations ..... 37

CHAPTER II.

Of the Love of Christ shewed unto faithful Believers, in ordaining this most Holy Sacrament of the Lord's Supper ..... 39
The second Meditation ..... 41
The Fruit of this Meditation ..... 42
A Spiritual Soliloquy upon this Meditation ..... 42

CHAPTER III.

Of the great excellency and worthiness of this Sacrament ..... 45
The third Meditation ..... 46
Further considerations of this Heavenly Banquet ..... 47
The Fruit of these Considerations ..... 48
A Spiritual Soliloquy ..... 48

CHAPTER IV.

Of the wonderful things of this Sacrament ..... 51
The fourth Meditation ..... 53
The Fruit ..... 54
The Spiritual Soliloquy ..... 54

CHAPTER V.

The manifold Effects and Fruits of this Holy Sacrament in general ..... 57

CHAPTER VI.

Page
Of the most Principal Effects of this Sacrament in particular.... 60
The Fruits of this Sacrament ..... 63
The Fifth Meditation..... 63
The Fruit of this Meditation..... 66
The Soliloquy ..... 66

CHAPTER VII.

A Dialogue between Man and his Soul..... 68

CHAPTER VIII.

Of the principal Causes which may move us to come to this Holy Sacrament..... 70
The Sixth Meditation..... 71
The Fruit..... 72
The Soliloquy..... 72

CHAPTER IX.

Of frequenting or receiving often the Holy Communion ..... 75
The Seventh Meditation..... 77
The Fruit ..... 79
The Soliloquy..... 79

CHAPTER X.

Of the Impediments which detain men from the blessed Sacrament..... 82
The Eighth Meditation..... 84
The Fruit..... 85
The Soliloquy..... 86
The Ninth Meditation—That to abstain from the Sacrament without just cause is an impediment unto our spiritual profit..... 87

CHAPTER XI.

A conference between the Soul and Faith ..... 91

CHAPTER XII.

Another Dialogue between the distressed Sinner and Faith..... 94

CHAPTER XIII.

A Spiritual Complaint of the Soul..... 96

CHAPTER XIV.

Of renouncing dangerous Impediments, which hinder the worthy receiving of this Holy Sacrament..... 98
The Tenth Meditation..... 99
The Fruit..... 100
The Soliloquy..... 101

CHAPTER XV.

Page
Of preparing ourselves before we come to this most Holy Sacrament ..... 103
The Eleventh Meditation ..... 105
The Fruits of this Meditation ..... 106

CHAPTER XVI.

A form of confessing our sins, before we come to receive the most Holy Sacrament ..... 107
Another form of Confession ..... 109

CHAPTER XVII.

A Meditation on these words, Whence cometh this, that my Lord cometh unto me? ..... 112

CHAPTER XVIII.

A Meditation upon these words of the Centurion, Lord, I am not worthy, &c. ..... 113

CHAPTER XIX.

A Meditation upon these words, But only say the word, &c ..... 115

CHAPTER XX.

A Meditation upon these words, I will come and cure him ..... 117
Soliloquy upon these words, From whence cometh it? ..... 118

CHAPTER XXI.

A Meditation upon that which St. Paul teacheth in 1 Corinthians, xi. 28. ..... 120

CHAPTER XXII.

A Meditation upon that of the Prodigal Son, when he was received of his Father ..... 122
The Soliloquy upon this Preparation ..... 123

CHAPTER XXIII.

A Meditation for the Day we are to Communicate ..... 126

CHAPTER XXIV.

A Meditation upon the History of Zacchæus ..... 128
The Application of this History ..... 129
The Fruit ..... 130
The Soliloquy ..... 130

CHAPTER XXV.

A Meditation upon these words, To-day I must abide in thine house ..... 133

CHAPTER XXVI.

Page

A short form of Confession, to be made in Private before the receiving of the blessed Sacrament..... 135

CHAPTER XXVII.

An Admonition, moving Christians to reconcile themselves, and forgive their enemies, before they come to be Partakers of the most Holy Sacrament of the Lord's Supper..... 137

CHAPTER XXVIII.

Of the Manner in particular how the Faithful Communicant is to examine himself..... 146

CHAPTER XXIX.

Of Restitution to be made..... 151

CHAPTER XXX.

Other Rules concerning a Christian's examining himself before he come to the Holy Communion..... 154

CHAPTER XXXI.

Of Quietness of Mind before the Receiving of the Holy Communion 156

CHAPTER XXXII.

Pious Considerations before we come to the Lord's Supper ..... 159

CHAPTER XXXIII.

Of External Reverence, and Kneeling at the Time of Receiving the Holy Sacrament..... 161

CHAPTER XXXIV.

A Prayer to God the Father, to be said before the Holy Communion..... 165

CHAPTER XXXV.

A Prayer to God the Son, before the Holy Communion..... 167
A Prayer to God the Holy Ghost ..... 167

CHAPTER XXXVI.

Of the Devout Man, to whom Christ in His Last Supper sheweth favour..... 170
The Fruit of this Meditation ..... 171
The Soliloquy..... 171

CHAPTER XXXVII.

Page
When you are about to Communicate, and are now receiving the most Holy Eucharist, meditate upon these sayings of Holy Scripture ..... 173

CHAPTER XXXVIII.

Of the great Esteem and Devotion given by the ancient Fathers to this most Holy Sacrament ..... 176

CHAPTER XXXIX.

A Form of Thanksgiving, after the Receiving of the most Holy Communion ..... 178

CHAPTER XL.

Another Form of Thanksgiving ..... 180
The Soliloquy ..... 180

CHAPTER XLI.

The Eleventh General Meditation, to be used after the Receiving of the Blessed Sacrament ..... 183
The Fruit of this Meditation ..... 186
The Soliloquy ..... 186

CHAPTER XLII.

Cautions to be observed of the Devout Christian after his receiving the Holy Sacrament ..... 188

CHAPTER XLIII.

Considerations concerning Newness of Life: to be used after the receiving of the Holy Communion ..... 191

CHAPTER XLIV.

Remedies against Pride and Vain Glory ..... 195

CHAPTER XLV.

Remedies against Covetousness ..... 196

CHAPTER XLVI.

Remedies against Luxuriousness of Life ..... 198

CHAPTER XLVII.

Remedies against Anger ..... 199

CHAPTER XLVIII.

Remedies against Envy ..... 200

CHAPTER XLIX.

Page
Remedies against Gluttony..... 201

CHAPTER L.

Remedies against Sloth..... 202

CHAPTER LI.

The chiefest figures of the most Holy Sacrament..... 204

CHAPTER LII.

Names of Excellence attributed unto the Holy Sacrament ; and gathered out of the writings of the Ancient Fathers..... 212

CHAPTER LIII.

A short Meditation on these names of Excellency..... 213

CHAPTER LIV.

Certain short Meditations upon the Passion : to be used before or after the receiving of the Holy Communion..... 214
A Prayer upon the Passion..... 219
A Prayer of St. Augustine..... 220

CHAPTER LVI.

The Twelfth Meditation concerning the Spiriual Communion of Christ, when the Sacramental may not be had..... 224

CHAPTER LVII.

That this Holy Sacrament is given to the Sick as necessary for the time of the last agony..... 227

CHAPTER LVIII.

What he ought to do who is upon short warning to Communicate, before he come to the Holy Table of the Lord..... 232 230

CHAPTER LIX.

The manner of Communicating used by a certain Virgin..... 232

CHAPTER LX.

Certain brief Questions and Answers concerning the blessed Sacrament..... 237

CHAPTER LXI.

These few observations should be observed by us before our access unto the Sacrament of the Lord's Supper..... 239

CHAPTER LXII.

A Diologue of the most Holy Communion between *Mundanus* and *Spiritualis* ; a Worldly Man and a Spiritual Man..... 240

CHAPTER LXIII.

Page
Another Dialogue, wherein is discussed the Doctrine and Benefit of the Blessed Sacrament..... 252

CHAPTER LXIV.

A Prayer before the receiving of the Communion..... 254
Another Prayer before the Communion..... 255
A Thanksgiving after the Communion..... 256
Another Thanksgiving after the Communion..... 256
Ejaculatory, or short Prayers, to be used after receiving of the Holy Communion..... 257

CHAPTER LXV.

Causes why the daily Communion, or the celebration of the Lord's Supper every Sabbath day, is not now in use, as it was in the Primitive Church..... 260

CHAPTER LXVI.

An Exhortation unto the Holy Communion, moving every devout Christian to repair often unto the same..... 262

CHAPTER LXVII.

Of the Spiritual Hunger we have, or ought to have, often to Communicate; and inducements unto the same. ..... 267
For the affecting of the conscience, three things are principally to be thought upon in the very time of Communicating..... 267
Christian Considerations to be thought upon by every one of us, both before and after the Holy Communion..... 268

CHAPTER LXVIII.

Devout Considerations to be used after the receiving of the Holy Sacrament.. ..... 270
Meditations accommodated to the several parts and Petitions contained in the Lord's Prayer, which prayer is wont to be prayed after our receiving..... 271
Of the vigilant care a Christian ought to have of not falling away from a good and godly course of life..... 273
A Prayer to obtain perseverance..... 274

CHAPTER LXIX.

Unto a fruitful receiving the Holy Sacrament, three things are required..... 275

CHAPTER LXX.

An Admonition to the Godly Reader concerning the Controversy about the Holy Eucharist, against sundry Reasons of Cardinal Bellarmine..... 277
The Peroration, or summing up by prayer the Admonition about the Controversy..... 294

CHAPTER LXXI.

Page
Godly Meditations upon the Passion of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ; necessary to be used before and after the Holy Communion ..... 296
The Fruits of this Meditation ..... 297
A Colloquy of the Soul with Christ, touching the Passion ..... 298

CHAPTER LXXII.

Of the manner in particular how to meditate on the Passion ..... 300
Certain brief Petitions to follow the former Meditations ..... 301

CHAPTER LXXIII.

Godly Meditations upon the Divine Presence; to stir up to a continual care of walking in the ways of God, after our receiving the Lord's Supper ..... 304

CHAPTER LXXIV.

How greatly this Exercise is commended in the Scriptures, and how special a care the Servant of God ought to place therein, being desirous to proceed in Godliness of living ..... 307

CHAPTER LXXV.

Of the exceeding great Fruits of this Divine Exercise; and first of all, of the fruit of pureness of mind ..... 314

CHAPTER LXXVI.

How, by the contemplation of the Divine Presence, Temptation may be overcome, and perseverance in Virtue attained ..... 319

CHAPTER LXXVII.

How, by this exercise of the Divine Presence, Stability of heart, the Perfection of Virtues, and outward Cleanness are attained 322

CHAPTER LXXVIII.

How this exercise of the Divine Presence doth bring Spiritual Comfort ..... 325

CHAPTER LXXIX.

By what means this gift of having God present in our actions is to be had ..... 328

CHAPTER LXXX.

How this Exercise, and all other good and godly actions, ought not to be deferred ..... 331
A brief form of commending oneself to God ..... 336

# GODLY MEDITATIONS,

&c.

## CHAPTER I.

### OF THE FIRST INSTITUTION OF THIS MOST HOLY SACRAMENT OF THE LORD'S SUPPER.

AMONGST other parts of divine worship, and religious duties of a Christian life, which knit men in love and service unto God, (for who should have the fruit but He that planted the tree,) there is none more solemn, none more divine, than is the celebration of the most Holy Sacrament of the Lord's Supper, in the due celebration whereof we present ourselves before God. We honour Him who hath honoured us, (miserable sinners that we are,) and thereby we become partakers of our greatest good.

1. Fasting humbleth, prayer beseecheth, repentance bewaileth, charity worketh, faith believeth;

but the Holy Sacrament applieth all by Christ Jesus' merits to the salvation of our souls.

2. If any ask (saith an ancient father) the Jews why they keep their Passover, all that they will answer is, to relate of a bondage in Egypt, of Pharaoh, their oppressor, of a Moses, God's servant, their deliverer. But if any ask me, who am a Christian, of our heavenly Passover, I can shew him not of Moses, a servant, but of Christ Jesus, the only Son of God; of a more terrible Pharaoh, the prince of darkness; of a more woful bondage, the shadow of death; and last of all, of a deliverance indeed by the Blood of that immaculate Lamb, once offered for the sins of the world.*

3. For our comfortable access to this most Holy Service, let us call to mind the first institution of the same, how we have Christ's own precept, and His promise.† His precept, *Hoc facite*, do this; His promise, *Hoc est corpus meum, hic est sanguis meus, &c.* This is My Body, which was given for you; this is My Blood, which was shed for you; as if here I offer you the benefit of My sufferings, and leave you a pledge at parting of My dearest love. *Novum testamentum*, a new testament, a new league or covenant between God and man, that God will now think on your sins in justice no more.

4. Saint Austin, in his 118th Epistle, *ad Januarium*, saith, our Saviour deferred the institution of

* Heb. ix. 28. † Matt. xxvi. 26. Luke xxii. 19.

this most Divine Sacrament to the end of His life, as His last farewell, that the dignity and excellency thereof might make the more deep impression in His disciples' hearts, increase in them greater love and devotion after His departure from them.

5. In the 14th and 16th of Exodus, God gave the people of Israel for the time of their abode in the wilderness manna from heaven, which manna they gathered until they came unto the land of promise. In like manner, so long as we remain in the wilderness of this world, we are gathering this our heavenly manna; but when we come unto that promised Canaan, then need we gather manna no more.

6. Christ our Saviour, when the time drew near, that He should be betrayed and delivered up unto death, He communeth with His disciples after this manner; "I have earnestly desired to eat the Passover with you before I suffer,"* *et acceptit panem, et benedixit, &c.* And He took bread and blessed it; in like manner He took the cup. In consecrating the elements of bread and wine, His prayers went up to heaven. His benefits remain with His Church here on earth. The visible elements which He took and gave, declare two things; the one, that He would the morrow following make Himself an oblation for the redemption of many upon the altar of the cross; the other, that He

* Luke xxii. 15.

would become unto the faithful by this means a divine sustenance for their souls. And thus He provideth for Himself an altar; for His, a table.—In both God hath the glory, and man the benefit.

### THE FIRST MEDITATION UPON THIS BLESSED INSTITUTION.

1. Consider how God created the world for man, and man only, to worship his Creator; a most excellent part of which worship is the Holy Sacrament.

2. Consider how the Lord Jesus, foreseeing the good of His Church and the affliction of His apostles to follow after His passion, knowing what they should need, and what we all of us should need, decreed to leave unto them and to us the Holy Eucharist, that they and we might receive help and strength by virtue thereof.

3. Consider how this help and strength is had by a spiritual repast; that as nourishments and the body nourished become one, so Christ and faithful receivers do become one with the Son of God Himself.

4. Consider Christ our Saviour in His passion as a testator; His inheritance is in heaven, His legacies are His grace, the executor is the Holy Ghost, His testament or will are promises of life laid down in His word, the seals are the two Sa-

craments, confirming these promises unto all faithful believers.

5. Consider how the faithful communicants do receive that which the words sound, to wit, preservation unto life everlasting, both of their bodies and souls.

### THE FRUIT OF THIS MEDITATION.

The fruit of this meditation is this, that every one dispose himself with all devotion to this holy institution; that he leave all earthly cogitations beneath, as Abraham in the 22d of Genesis did his servants, when he went up to the mount to do sacrifice unto God.

### A SPIRITUAL SOLILOQUY, OR MEDITATION OF THE SOUL WITH GOD UPON THESE MEDITATIONS.

Omnipotent and everlasting God, make me, I beseech thee, Thy unworthy servant; what said I? Thy servant? yea, rather by reason of sin, Thine enemy. O Lord, make me careful in the performance of this, so high a part of thy holy worship. I come, Lord, as the sick to the physician of life, as an offender to the Lord of mercy, as the blind to the light of the eternal Sun, as the poor and needy to the God of heaven and earth, rich in mercy; therefore, O Lord, cure my infirmities, pardon my

offences, lighten my blindness, enrich my poverty, grant that I may with such reverence receive this heavenly manna with such contrition and devotion, with such purity and faith, with such a purpose and intent, as is expedient for my salvation.—And grant that at last I may behold perpetually Thy beloved Son, with face revealed, whom now I receive in the way by faith only; who liveth and reigneth with Thee and the Holy Ghost, one God, for ever and ever. Amen.

## CHAPTER II.

OF THE LOVE OF CHRIST SHEWED UNTO FAITHFUL BELIEVERS, IN ORDAINING THIS MOST HOLY SACRAMENT OF THE LORD'S SUPPER.

FOR that this Sacrament is a Sacrament of love, and left unto us from the love of our beloved Saviour, it is convenient that to put away the suspicion of ingratitude, it be received and handled with love chiefly, seeing we can requite in no other thing the love declared in ordaining this Sacrament, so full of love, than by love: of which love God would that we should dispose, and so change it into what we see most pleasing to Him: whereupon as Christ our Saviour, while He giveth Himself to us for meat, giveth us a token of His highest love with His grace, with so many merits of His preachings, labours, fastings, prayers; so we, when we give to God our love, we do give Him all things which we have most precious. Hence it cometh that God doth more esteem, and that more worthily too, of this one love, than of all other things in the world, neither doth He require any other thing of us; when elsewhere he saith, "My Son, give me thy heart,"* that is to say, the love

* Prov. xxiii. 26.

which is thine. When Christ our Saviour humbled Himself to be baptized of John Baptist,* it made John more humble himself to Christ. His love should wound our hearts, and make us love Him who is love itself; and this love of His is manifest to us by instituting this most Holy Sacrament. When Nathan the prophet would shew King David† what love the poor man bare to that ewe lamb which he nourished in his bosom, he gave him, saith he, of his own meat, and drink of his own cup. Christ, to shew his love towards us, hath given us of His own bread, and of His own cup; nay, He hath given us His own Body as bread, His own Blood as wine, for the nourishment of our souls.

David wondered at the exceeding love of God, saying, "Who am I, O Lord God, that thou hast brought me unto this?"‡ We may with admiration say, Lord, what is earth and ashes, that thou hast exalted the same to this dignity? Almighty God appeared to Moses in the burning bush, so doth He to the faithful inflamed with love.

God did highly honour Joshua in that He made the sun to stay until He had the victory; but what honour had it been, had He brought the same sun down from heaven? This hath He done for us by the Son of righteousness, who exiled Himself thirty-three years from the throne of glory, and be-

* Matt. iii. 14. † 2 Sam. xii. 3. ‡ 2 Samuel vii. 18.

came the son of man, that we might be made the sons of God.

### THE SECOND MEDITATION.

1. Consider how in this Holy Mystery thou art bound to love the gift with the Giver. If when the people would have made Christ a King,* He had then sought to requite their favour, it had not been so much; but when they gave Him gall to eat, and vinegar to drink, then to leave this testimony of favours and love, it was love without example. Had He bestowed this, so great a gift, on the Saints or Angels, it had not been so wonderful; but bestowing it on poor sinners, this was pure love indeed.

2. Consider how great care our Saviour hath shewed towards us, in instituting this Sacrament, seeing nothing could be given more excellent, more dear, when He loved His which were in the world, He loved them unto the end.†

3. Consider what Saint Chrysostom saith; Our Lord instituted this Divine Sacrament, that we might be made one with Him, forasmuch as He is such a meat as doth turn itself into the worthy receiver. So hereby Christ doth draw us unto Him, with the bonds of love, and doth in this gift allure us to love Him. Heat doth turn the nourishment

* John vi. 15. † John xvii. 26.

into the body nourished; the same is done by fervency of love in faithful receivers.

### THE FRUIT OF THIS MEDITATION.

The fruit of this meditation is, that every one meditating on the love of Christ ask the question, and make the answer with the prophet *quid retribuam, &c.* "What shall I give unto the Lord for all the benefits He hath done unto me? I will take the cup of salvation," &c.*

### A SPIRITUAL SOLILOQUY UPON THIS MEDITATION.

O sweet Jesus, could it be that such was Thy love towards us, that when Thou wast the King of Glory, and Creator of all the world, Thou wouldest Thyself be meat for Thine own creatures? O Love, Thy love is too, too great; for I thought sufficient, that which the Wise Man speaketh,—"Love is as strong as death."† But I see much more may be spoken of this Thy love, for Thy arrows overcoming heaven, do penetrate where death doth not come nor approach; Thou also dost fix this love in the heart of man, and not only pluck it away from all things created, but even from itself.

It was sufficient that Thou wast given to us for a Lord and God, in which thing the prophet hath

* Psalm cxvi. 12, 13. † Gant. viii. 6

placed his blessedness; "Blessed are the people whose God is the Lord."* But love hath drawn thee to that which the wisdom of man cannot comprehend; and it remaineth most true that Thou, when Thou wast God of all majesty, most infinite and immortal, wast made man, didst die and suffer for us.

When I consider that Thou in the selfsame time, wherein the streams of Thy tribulations did overflow, wherein Thy only thought constrained a bloody sweat out of Thy body, forgetful of Thine own self, and all the torments which were preparing, wast careful of procuring such a meat for us as might strengthen us in the state of grace until we see Thee in the state of glory. O amiable Jesu! how truly is it written of Thy love "Many waters could not extinguish this love, nor floods overwhelm it,"† namely, many waters of Thy passion and floods of Thy grief could not withhold Thee, whereby Thou wouldest not provide and impart this singular and precious gift for us. O sweet Jesus, it had been enough to call us brethren when Thou wast humbled on the earth; but wilt thou so call us ascending to heaven, saying, "I ascend to my Father and your Father," &c.; nay, to call the poor so, that Thou wouldest and wilt call them brethren, whatsoever ye did to the least of these, My brethren.

* Psalm cxliv. 15. † Cant. viii. 7.

The prophet Elisha greatly esteemed the cloak of his master Elijah, left him at his departure; wherewith he divided the waters of Jordan, and passed over on dry foot;* but here the Lord and God of Elijah hath left unto thee not any garment, but His most sacred Body, that He may be a companion with thee in this laboursome pilgrimage, in passing over the waters of tribulation, and a wholesome food of a spiritual life. Judge now, then, how much thou oughtest to relove Him, and with what ardent affection to receive Him. In the mean time, beseech this Benefactor, that it happen not unto thee, as unto the people of the Jews; to whom, when our Lord Jesus offered Himself for their Master and Teacher, they, renouncing His doctrine and Mastership, kept still the covering of their eyes and, which was worse, joined to their blindness the sin of unthankfulness.

* 2 Kings ii. 13.

## CHAPTER III.

### ON THE GREAT EXCELLENCY AND WORTHINESS OF THIS SACRAMENT.

MOST high and sumptuous is the preparation which wisdom hath ordained, bounty furnished, and Christ Himself with His honourable presence beautified. This preparation is not as in times past in the wilderness, or in the moveable tabernacle of Moses; or the fixed Temple of Solomon, but in a great chamber, a large upper room in the most ample Church, dispersed far and wide upon the face of the earth; here Christ Himself is the giver and the gift; the feeder and the food.

It is said of Hezekiah* that he kept a passover, and such a passover as never was there any the like before; but much more may be said of Christ's Holy Supper. Admire not any longer the sumptuous preparation, or the greatness of the gift of king Ahasuerus in the fourth of Esther, after he betrothed unto him Esther in marriage; for those gifts were earthly, and could not give life and spirit. Admire rather the precious gift of Christ given unto His Church, after He had espoused Her unto

*2 Chron. xxx.

Himself; which gift is heavenly, and of such infinite value that it cannot be valued.

### THE THIRD MEDITATION.

1. Consider the great excellency of this holy and heavenly feast, where Christ, the true Paschal Lamb is received, the memory of His death and passion recounted, the mind filled with grace, and a pledge of future glory given unto us.

2. Consider these five differences, which are between this feast and the feasts of the world.

1. The feasts of the world are profane, for in them neither is there holy meat, neither are they ordained for the health of the soul; but this feast is a sanctified feast, and ordained principally for the health of the soul.

2. In the feasts of the world there are variety, and by how much the more the variety is the greater, by so much the more is the feast commended. In this spiritual banquet it is not so, wherein Christ being infinite, containeth in him all perfection, and can alone satisfy the soul.

3. In the feasts of the world there is little speech had of death, suffering, affliction, and tribulation, rather discourse is had of pleasures: but in the feast of Christ, the memorial of His death and passion, His sufferings of love for our salvation, is remembered.

4. In this banquet, the mind is filled with the

grace of Christ, which bringeth salvation, and the increase of heavenly gifts: but in the banquets of the world the body is replenished with meats that often bring diseases to the body, and spiritual destruction to the soul.

5. In the feasts of the world, for the great excess used in them, they open a way to hell; but in this Holy feast Christ setteth open unto us the ready way unto Heaven.

### FURTHER CONSIDERATIONS OF THIS HEAVENLY BANQUET.

Consider how well pleasing it is to the Lord Jesus, that we do all these things in this feast, which guests invited of the prince to some solemn preparation are wont to do.

1. They expect with great desire the hour of this feast, and give their diligent attendance, that they may come in decent and seemly manner, well adorned.

2. They knowing that nothing is more acceptable unto the prince who inviteth them, than to feed heartily on the means prepared, they come with empty stomachs, and a desire to be satisfied.

3. They diligently beware that they neither do nor speak any thing which may be offensive to the person who hath called them.

4. They do not by and by depart, but stay awhile, and interchange familiar conference with

the prince; at one time praising his liberality, at another the magnificence of the feast.

5. At their departure they yield reverence, and give humble thanks for the favour vouchsafed them. Acknowledging their bounden duty unto so noble a prince, they offer themselves to be ready at his pleasure to perform any service he shall command them.

These properties of good and thankful guests should much rather be performed in this heavenly feast, whereunto we are called by the Son of God Himself: and therefore we should expect, receive with joy, and yield thanks; promising to serve Him in holiness and Righteousness all the days of our life.

### THE FRUIT OF THESE CONSIDERATIONS.

The fruit of these considerations may be drawn from a meditation of the greatness and magnificence of this so Holy a Mystery, which greatness may stir us up to be thankful to so liberal a Lord, who calleth to so great honour, and bestoweth so many benefits, yet requireth so few of us again.

### A SPIRITUAL SOLILOQUY.

It is no marvel, O Lord, if the bountifulness of Thy Holy feast do make us astonished; for Isaiah, in the twenty-fifth chapter of his prophecy, foreseeing it many ages before, as a picture shadowed

over, stood amazed thereat, and saith, to the praise and glory thereof, "The Lord of Hosts shall make to all people, on this hill, a feast of fat things."* Great shall this feast be, O Holy prophet, for that not every one, but the Lord of Hosts, shall ordain it; and that not to certain men alone, but to all the people of the world; neither in every place, but on a hill. Lastly, it shall be a feast of fat things; yea, of the most heavenly food that ever was.

Be glad, O Holy Church, for that thou art that holy hill, chosen of God for that heavenly banquet: in thee doth stand the table prepared; thy dear children are like the olive branches in the compass thereof.

Arise, O my soul, and depart from thyself forthwith out of this dark valley, for the Lord doth invite thee to His feast, not with thundering and lightning, as He did the children of Israel, in the 19th of Exodus, but He inviteth thee with loving words, "Come unto the marriage."† That law doth not any longer stand in force; "He that toucheth the hill shall die the death."‡ But rather, he that cometh to this hill, and eateth of this Sacrament, shall live for ever.

But mark, my soul, that all cannot ascend to this hill, but only as the kingly prophet speaketh,‖ the harmless and pure in heart; and not after every

* Isaiah xxv. 6. † Matthew xxii. 4. ‡ Exodus xix. 12.
‖ Psalm xv. 1.

sort, but with a wedding garment,* wherewith we ought to be decked at Christ's feasts, otherwise we shall hear these terrible words, "Cast him bound hand and foot into outer darkness."

Woe be to me, O Lord, who like the Prodigal Son,† by luxurious living have bewrayed and torn the garment of innocence received in Holy Baptism. Woe, wretched creature that I am, if Thou help me not, O Lord, I dare not appear at Thy holy feast. What shall I do, if for my sins I shall be refused of Thee? What shall I do, when with shame I am forbidden to come without a wedding garment? Haply I may sew me a garment of leaves, as Adam did, after he left the garment of innocence given him of God: but alas! that will as little profit me as it profited Adam, when he durst not come into God's sight with that garment, but hid himself; but if I hide myself, shall I not be deprived of thy heavenly and healthsome feast.

I turn me, therefore, to Thee, O Father of mercy, and I confess that I have offended Thee after that manner, that I am no more worthy to be called Thy son; but trusting in Thy infinite goodness, I beseech Thee that Thou wilt not respect the greatness of my offences but the greatness of Thy goodness. I am not worthy to be called Thy son, make me, O Lord, as Thy meanest servant. Grant only the lowest room at Thy table and it sufficeth.

* Matthew xxii. 11. † Luke xv. 13.

## CHAPTER IV.

### OF THE WONDERFUL THINGS OF THIS SACRAMENT.

WONDERFUL is God in all His works; but in none more than in the holy institution of His Last Supper.

Amongst other names of excellence which the prophet Esaias attributeth to the second Person in the holy, blessed, and glorious Trinity, this is one: "His name is Wonderful."* How truly this is verified in this His holy institution may be left to the contemplation of faith, which is then most strong when human reason stands mute.

When as Almighty God rained down manna amongst the people of Israel,† the people being amazed at the sight thereof, said *manhu*, that is, What is this? And the thing seemed so wonderful, that they beholding it truly admirable, passed over as it were to the first word *man*. Lord, what is this? What is this, that the Son of God should take the nature of man, and after a spiritual and heavenly manner be given for meat to a new people, to whom all things are manifest in truth?

* Isaiah ix. 6. † Exodus xvi. 15.

What is this, that He which dwelleth in Heaven, sitteth among the choir of angels, would come into the world, and after a wonderful and admirable manner, dwell with the sons of men? What is this, that the Lord of Majesty, who is of the same substance with the Father and the Holy Ghost, will be made one with man, and take up His abode, with him?

What meat is this, which doth cleanse our leprosy, comfort the conscience, and cure our souls?

What is this? What piety is this? What bowels of mercy are these? Surely the gift is worthy of the Giver. Solomon brake out into a certain kind of admiration, speaking of the ark of the covenant, in the first of Kings, *ergone putandum est quod vere Deus habitat super terram, si eum et cæli cælorum capere non possunt, quanto minus domus hæc?* "And is it true indeed that God will abide on earth, whom the Heavens, nor the Heaven of Heavens, cannot contain, much less this house?* O the depth of the wisdom of the Most Highest: Thy judgments are past finding out. But should we presume to lift up our eyes against those glistening beams whereby the sharpest eagle may be dazzled? No, surely, for then there would be no end of admiration: superfluous were it to wade far; we best know God's mysteries, when with all

* 1 Kings viii. 27.

thankfulness we admire them, and say Blessed be God in all His works.

St. Chrysostom, in his 61st Homily to the Priests of Antioch, calleth this Sacrament the miracle of the mysteries of the Christian law, wherein our Saviour imparteth His Body and Blood, thereby to declare the desire wherewith He burneth of uniting Himself unto us, which is proper to them that love ardently Here Samson's riddle is solved: *de comedente exivit cibus, de forti egressa est dulcedo:* Out of the eater came meat; out of the strong came sweetness. What is stronger than the lion? What sweeter than honey? Christ is the Lion of the tribe of Judah: honey the spiritual sweetness of the Holy Eucharist.

## THE FOURTH MEDITATION.

### *Of the wonderful things of this Sacrament.*

1. Let us behold with the eyes of faith, one of the greatest and most comfortable works of God under Heaven; and for this inestimable benefit laud and praise His holy name.

2. Let us with thankful hearts wonder at the love of God, who after He received us into His family, there placed us not as servants, but as sons; and that he might shew the part of a careful Father, doth provide a mean to nourish us,

and that after such a Divine manner of nourishing.

3. Consider the Divine Wisdom of the Son of God, who, respecting our weakness, hath conveyed unto us His Body and Blood after a Divine and Spiritual manner, under the forms of Bread and Wine.

4. Consider how by this Holy Communion occasion is given to exercise our faith in prayer, that our receiving may be unto life everlasting.

5. Consider the high and worthy effect of this heavenly food, which is not so much changed into the substance of the eater, as it doth rather change the eater into the substance of it; the meat being Divine, doth make us also Divine. O the omnipotent wisdom and power of the love of God!

### THE FRUIT.

The fruit of this meditation is, to lift up ourselves above ourselves, and bless God for this wonderful benefit, without curious searching and needless questioning about the manner how, but to give God thanks, and be ashamed rather at ourselves, that neither the wonderfulness of His power, nor the greatness of His benefits, can make us no more love Him than we do.

### THE SPIRITUAL SOLILOQUY.

O my soul, thou art happy which hast prepared for thee so wonderful and so high a repast, as there

can be found none either in Heaven or earth higher; for in it is contained that which the apostle in the first and third to the Hebrews calleth the brightness of the glory of God; but hidden, that He might heap on thee the more benefits; thou knowest Moses descending from the Mount Sinai, on which he had talked with God, the children of Israel could not talk with him for the brightness of his face: wherefore, as the Scripture saith, "He put a covering before his face;"* that all might speak with him. In like sort our heavenly Moses hath done, who, not content with thy deliverance from the hard servitude of Egypt and spiritual Pharaoh, but that thou shouldest not be terrified with the great brightness of His glory, after an ineffable manner doth come unto thee, and commune with thee.

Jacob said, "Surely God is in this place, and I was not aware of it."†

O wonderful love, how far hast thou gone with my Lord! Just cause hast thou, O my soul, to rejoice, and in rejoicing to admire the goodness of thy blessed Saviour; cease to measure the greatness of this work by the weakness of thine own understanding; say rather with the prophet, *Memoriam fecit mirabilium suorum*, "The merciful Lord hath made a memorial of His wonders, He hath given meat to them that fear Him."‡

* Exodus xxxiv. 33. † Genesis xxviii. 16. ‡ Psalm cxi. 4, 5.

When the Son of God clothed Himself with our flesh, it was a work very admirable, for therein He assumed human nature mortal and passible; but when the faithful receive the Holy Eucharist, man doth participate a divine nature immortal and heavenly. Hence it was said of God by the Psalmist, *Tu es magnus, faciens mirabilia*, "Lord, Thou art great, doing wonderful things."* When Abraham weaned Isaac,† he made a feast; Christ, to wean His disciples from the love of this world, made them this heavenly feast.

* Psalm lxxxvi. 10. † Genesis xxi. 8.

## CHAPTER V.

### THE MANIFOLD EFFECTS AND FRUITS OF THIS HOLY SACRAMENT IN GENERAL.

WE may remember that which indeed we cannot forget, that as man consisteth of soul and body, so doth he also lead a twofold life; the one corporeal, ready to fall into a thousand dangers and casualties; the other spiritual, subject to as many, or more. The life of the body consisteth of the union of the soul with the body. The life of the soul consisteth of another union which is to be united to Christ. Both these as they have their defect, so have they also their remedies and sustentations; for the life natural, God hath ordained natural sustenance; for the life supernatural, supernatural nourishment.

But that which at all times is most to be lamented, is that whereas the spiritual life is far more excellent than the temporal, the temporal notwithstanding is more regarded and preferred. For what thing doth not a sick body do to recover his

health? He neglecteth all charges and griefs, he esteemeth nothing of the bitterness of medicines, he contemneth the sharpness of pains, the most experienced physicians, the best preservatives are then sought for, and all for bodily health, which endureth but for a little time. And are we so careful for the health of our souls? Would to God we were! Then would we repair with more devotion than commonly we do unto this most Holy Sacrament, where our spiritual life is preserved and strengthened.

Three things there are, saith one, very necessary for the life of man:—the mother, which brings him forth; the meat, which sustaineth him; and the physician, which cures him when he is sick.

The same three things are necessary for the life spiritual. The mother, is Baptism; the meat which sustaineth, is the Holy Eucharist; the physician to cure, is repentance.

Now then, as the body without meat cannot endure labour and live, no more can the soul, without this spiritual repast, sustain the labours of this pilgrimage, the assaults of her enemies, and live. The air being corrupted when we go forth of doors, we fortify ourselves with some preservatives. This world is corrupted, our preservative against temptations is this Holy Eucharist. Men entering a way possessed with the enemy, arm

themselves with weapons, get them good company; seeing we have in all the way of our life many enemies, visible and invisible, shall we not arm ourselves, and take unto us Christ our Captain? "Put ye on," saith St. Paul, "the Lord Jesus."*

*Romans xiii. 14.

## CHAPTER VI.

### OF THE MOST PRINCIPAL EFFECTS OF THIS SACRAMENT IN PARTICULAR.

THE first and principal effect of the most Holy Sacrament of the Lord's Supper is, as we may so speak, that it deifieth first, that is, it maketh man Divine, or like unto God himself! herein the state of grace, and hereafter in the state of glory; and for this cause it is instituted in the form of nourishments. For as nourishments and the body nourished, become one; so do Christ and the faithful receivers. Other meats receive life of the body, this giveth life to the soul.

The second effect is, that with Christ are given unto us all His merits and rewards which He hath purchased; here the hive is given us with the honey.

The third effect of this sacrament is that hereby a continual and constant remembrance of Christ Jesus our only Saviour, is continued; whereby we shew his death until he come again.*

The fourth effect is, to stir us up to the love of God and our neighbour. Of God, who first loved

*1 Corinthians xi. 26.

us ; of our neighbour, for His sake, who hath given us this commandment, "that he who loveth God, should love his neighbour also."*

5. The fifth effect is, that it doth sanctify and see also sanctified, not only our souls, but even our bodies also, by the power of Christ's Body. We know that the forbidden fruit received by our first parents, infected our souls and defiled our bodies; it was meet, therefore, that this heavenly food should cause sanctification not only in our souls, but also in our bodies. So Christ will never send them away empty that they faint by the way, that follow Him, as the people did in the desert.†

What, should we enter into that sea of the manifold effects of this Sacrament! If I am sick, may the devout soul say, here I may cure me; if I am whole, here I shall keep me; if living, here I shall comfort me; if dead in sin, here I shall raise me; if I desire to burn with the love of God, here I may inflame me; if I am cold in devotion, here I may warm me; if I am blind, here I may enlighten me; if spotted, here I may cleanse me. I will not fly as Adam sometimes did, from the presence of God, because here I can cover me; nor run away for fear of the enemy, for here I shall find grace to strengthen me.

St. Cyril, in his fourth book upon John, saith, "Here not only death is put to flight, but all spi-

* 1 John iv. 21. † Matthew xiv. 15.

ritual diseases that cause death are expelled; the cruel and inordinate love of our members is repressed, and the perturbations of the mind quieted."

Thomas Aquinas called this Sacrament a precious banquet, admirable, wholesome, and full of all sweetness: and to provoke us the more to love it, he addeth, "Here sins are cleansed, virtues increased, the mind made fertile with all spiritual graces: and that when Christ saw His disciples to wax sad for His departure, He left unto them this Sacrament for a singular comfort."

Amongst these effects, this may not be omitted, that this holy Sacrament is a pledge of the Resurrection, as it is mentioned in the hundredth canon of the first council of Nice: "For this eucharistical food," saith Justin Martyr, Apol. 2, "is not received by concoction and alteration, but doth change the mortality of our bodies into His own nature, that is, into immortality, life and glory. Wherefore amongst other effects this doth admonish us of the immortality of our bodies; for as Christ's body did not remain in death, so also shall not ours: for it cannot be that our bodies should always remain in their sepulchres, seeing that they are nourished by Christ's body."—*Iræn. lib.* iv. *ad val.*

### THE FRUITS OF THIS SACRAMENT.

The fruits hereof may be reduced to these twelve: the first of all the properties is, that it serveth to quicken; secondly, to set at liberty; thirdly, to inflame; fourthly, to give patience in trouble; fifthly, to nourish; sixthly, to restore; seventhly, to unite; eighthly, to communicate; ninthly, to make whole; tenthly, to preserve; eleventhly, to strengthen; twelfthly, to conduct through. And therefore this Sacrament is called *Viaticum*, the provision for the way until we come to Him, who hath said, "I am the way." Elias passed his journey in the strength of the meat given him,* until he came to the Mount Horeb; so we in the strength of this meat, until we come to the mount of Heaven.

It is written of Obed-Edom in the second book of Samuel,† that he and his did prosper, because he received the ark of God into his house. How much more shall this be accomplished in those who receive Christ Jesus truly into their souls?

### THE FIFTH MEDITATION.

Consider, that as the soul newly created of God, so soon as it cometh into the body, which descended of Adam, is forthwith contaminated, and

* 1 Kings xix. 8. † 2 Samuel vi 11.

made partaker of the whole evil and misery wherein he enwrapped mankind by his transgression; so likewise as soon as the soul receiveth Christ, it is forthwith made partaker of His merits and righteousness. And this is one cause why this Sacrament is called a Communion, where after a spiritual manner *datur nobis quod datur pro nobis*, that is given to us which is given for us.

2. Consider, that as He bringeth unto thee the fruit of His life and death, His resurrection and ascension; so also He desireth to communicate thee unto His members.

3. Consider, that the understanding is so enlightened by this holy Sacrament, that it easily cometh unto the knowledge of God; whence the two disciples going to Emmaus straight upon the breaking of bread, as the scripture saith, "their eyes were opened, and they knew the Lord."

4. Consider, that it was not the hem of the garment, for what virtue could there be in so mean a subject to procure health? but it was the hem of Christ's garment. So it is not bread and wine, but this Bread and this Wine, that sanctifieth our souls.

5. Consider, how it reneweth God's grace, that like as bodily food doth renew that which natural heat had consumed, so this heavenly nourishment restoreth that which the soul, through the heat of evil desires had lost.

6. Consider, it joineth us to Christ our Head, and also unto our neighbours, who are Christ's members; provoking us to love them with true charity: and therefore this Sacrament is called of the Fathers, the Sacrament of Union and Love; for Christ by giving His the same food, uniteth them unto Himself.

St. Augustine writeth, that this Sacrament is instituted under the form of bread and wine, for that as bread is made of many grains, and the wine out of many grapes; so the faithful, being many, they are by faith in Christ and unity among themselves made one, as He into whom they are engrafted is one.

7. Consider, the great peace and tranquillity of the mind which cometh by this Sacrament, that as the ship was tossed and troubled before, but when Christ once came into it all was calm; so in this world we are often troubled, but when Christ cometh all is quiet.

We may call to mind what our Saviour would have His disciples say, into what house soever they entered, "Peace be unto this house;"* how much more may be said of that heart where this Holy Mystery is truly and worthily received, Peace be unto this heart? It is called a supper; and after supper we are wont to take rest.

* Luke x. 5.

### THE FRUIT OF THIS MEDITATION

Is, to desire with our whole heart to have part in these effects; to hunger and thirst after righteousness: to remember that of the woman of Samaria, who when she heard Christ speak of the waters of life, said, "Give me, Lord, of this water."* So, O Lord, give us of this food, which may work in our souls these so many and so worthy effects.

### THE SOLILOQUY.

Dost thou desire to know, O my soul, with what good things Christ in this Holy Mystery hasteth unto thee? How He cometh laden and enriched with so many merits and rewards? Whatsoever He brought into the world, all those He exhibiteth in this most Divine Sacrament. He that ministereth such food to him that fighteth, what doth he keep in store for him that overcometh? Surely in that immortal life, in that land of promise, He will fill thy desires with all happiness, which in this wilderness giveth thee such heavenly manna. And what doth He so much covet of thee, my soul, by this most noble food, than that He may plentifully reward thee with unspeakable graces? Mark what He bringeth: more, I assure thee, than thou

* John iv. 15.

canst wish or desire. "Behold," saith He, "I stand at the door and knock; if any hear My voice, and shall open to Me the gate, I will enter in unto him, and sup with him."*

What wilt thou do, O my soul, in so great abundance of all good things? Do what thou art able, and do it quickly. Be thou enlarged to receive such mysteries: make clean the place of thy heart; prepare the upper room of thy best, and best disposed devotion; exclude a mind beating upon vain and idle cogitations; exclude an entrance to evil desires; yield acceptable passage to the bridegroom Christ Jesus; gird up thy loins with the girdle of truth; light the lamp of faith; go forth to meet Him, and receive Him joyfully.

* Rev. iii. 20.

## CHAPTER VII.

### A DIALOGUE BETWEEN MAN AND HIS SOUL.

MAN. It is true, my soul, that this heavenly food doth bring with it many great and excellent effects to the living: but tell me, what doth it profit one dead?

*Soul.* Nothing.

*Man.* Then will not this Sacrament do thee any good, if thou art one dead?

*Soul.* But how can I die, being Immortal?

*Man.* It is true, thou canst not be extinguished with bodily death, like beasts without reason; but thou mayest die well enough with spiritual death, which is by a separation of God's grace from thee: for as the death of the body consisteth in the separation of the soul from the body, so thy death by thy separation from Christ.

*Soul.* Doth the grace of God give life to the soul?

*Man.* Yea, even as the soul giveth life unto the body.

*Soul.* But who can deprive the soul of grace, which is the life thereof?

*Man.* Sin; as the prophet Ezekiel saith, (xviii. 4.) "That soul that sinneth, it shall die;" that is, shall be deprived of grace; and what is more, of future glory.

*Soul.* From whence hath sin that power?

*Man.* From God's just decree, and the very nature of sin, which is an offence done to God, a stain that soileth man, and that which obligeth man to a punishment.

*Soul.* Well, seeing sin is so dangerous, I will not continue in the actions thereof any more.

*Man.* Surely then shalt thou be happy in the end; and we shall be blessed partakers together of Christ's inestimable benefits both in this world and the world to come.

## CHAPTER VIII.

### OF THE PRINCIPAL CAUSES WHICH MAY MOVE US TO COME TO THIS HOLY SACRAMENT.

A CONSIDERATION of the obedience we all owe to the Author of this sacred Institution, who in the ordaining thereof had no other end but the glory of God His Father, and man's true and perfect good. *Si rem grandem dixisses*, "Had he bade us do some great things, should we not have done them?"*

A consideration had on behalf of our weakness who stand in need of so many assistant helps as we do, cannot but move us to use with all reverence, and desire with all our hearts' affection, this holy mean of receiving grace, left unto us by the Giver of Grace. For we do not celebrate a remembrance only of some thing past, but we are partakers also of grace present; which grace, though not from *ex opere operato*, by that work done, yet by the Sacrament (as water from the fountain by the conduit pipes) is conveyed and derived unto us.

* 2 Kings v. 13.

That we offer unto God the sacrifice of laud and praise, give testimony unto men, we are members of that mystical body whereof Christ is the Head, shew evidently unto the world how desirous we are to continue in that holy union with God and man; the only celebration of this most Holy Sacrament doth well declare and shew, and the sundry and manifold effects thereof, do give sufficient testimony in behalf of all faithful receivers.

## THE SIXTH MEDITATION.

1. Consider, that the union of the body and soul is near, but the union of Christ and the faithful nearer; that separable, this inseparable.

2. Consider, that this most Divine Sacrament is ordained by Christ our Saviour as a most gracious mean to derive His grace unto us, to preserve us from evil, and also spiritually to sustain and nourish our souls unto life everlasting.

3. Consider, He hath left unto us this mystery, that by the benefits thereof we might be transformed unto Him, by living according to His will, which is no other thing than God to live in us.

4. Consider, how much it concerneth us to return careful duty unto Christ, to exercise religious actions of Christian piety, to offer God the sacrifice of thanksgiving for the inestimable benefit of our redemption, to observe and keep with all rever-

ence this High and Holy Ordinance left unto us by His Son and our only Saviour and Redeemer: So be it.

### THE FRUIT.

The fruit of this meditation is, to apply our diligence in the performing of this excellent part of God's service, and to remember that which was said to Moses, "Do according to the example which I shewed thee in the mount."*

### THE SOLILOQUY.

Thou art too loving, O my Saviour; it had been sufficient to procure some remedy for us of Thy creatures, and we had taken it in great favour; but it was not sufficient for Thy burning love, but Thou wouldst be Thyself a remedy for our souls, that the saying of the Wise Man† might be accomplished in Thee. A faithful friend is the medicine of life and immortality: what friend more faithful than my blessed Saviour? what medicine of more efficacy than this Divine Sacrament? But that Thou wouldest that the effect thereof should in part depend on us, that was an argument of love indeed.

If bodily medicines should work according to

* Exodus xxv. 49. † Ecclesiastes vi. 16.

the intent and desire of the sick, it would be very acceptable, and all sick folks would think themselves bound to the authors thereof; how much more are we beholden to Thee, who with so great love hast provided for us a medicine of such efficacy, and so wholesome, that doth work more of itself than we can desire.

How much, O Lord, do the laws of human philosophy differ from the laws of Thy love!—What philosopher of the world hath ever written or thought that a King of all Majesty, the infinite sea of all perfectness, would leave Himself for food unto His own creatures! What wisdom of this world had ever been able to conceive, that God, the King of all Glory, to the intent He might couple and unite man unto Himself, would be willing to become His meat? O my soul, stand amazed at the love of thy Saviour; make an end of tears, bewail not any longer thine own vileness and weakness, for three loving sisters and advocates have pleaded thy cause and found favour: Mercy hath presented thine infirmity, and found grace; Wisdom hath invented the means to obtain help; Love hath constrained Christ to put it in execution! This is the means that Jesus, by the means of this most powerful Sacrament would unite Thee unto Himself, that thou mightest be made one with Him; and to this end thou dost receive Him.

We give Thee thanks, O heavenly Adam, who hath restored that which the earthly Adam hath destroyed; he by his meat caused us to depart from God, and Thou by Thy meat to be united to God. I pray Thee my loving Jesus, that this union may be firm and sound, that neither life nor death may separate us from Thee. Cause us, O Lord, that we may be wholly joined to Thee, that we may glory with the Apostle, and say, "We live, but now not we, but Christ liveth in us."* Amen.

* Galatians ii. 20.

## CHAPTER IX.

### OF FREQUENTING OR RECEIVING OFTEN THE HOLY COMMUNION.

IT hath been shewed that the Holy Eucharist is the sustenance of the soul, as bread and wine are of the body; but the soul being of far more excellency than the body, it were then most unseemly that the body, which is transitory, should be often and carefully fed; and the soul, which is according to the image of God, should be neglected, and little respected. Meat, unless it be taken in due season, doth not profit the receiver: treasure that is not employed doth turn us to no benefit. The use therefore, and frequent use, of this Heavenly repast, is behoveful: we have no more special means to relieve our infirmities, to procure more light and strength, to know and overcome all temptations, to pass over this life with more peace and spiritual comfort, to be at our death more assisted with heavenly consolation, than by often participating of the Holy Eucharist.

There are, saith one, three things among the rest which do always hold men bound to God.

The first is, the multitude of His benefits, for which we ought to give thanks: the second is, the multitude of our sins, for which we ought to ask mercy: the third is, the multitude of miseries and infirmities, for which we are bound to seek a remedy. Now for the acknowledgment of our duty, the blotting out our offences, the relief of our miseries, there is at once no more strong and forcible a mean than the frequent use of this most Holy Sacrament, wherein we offer praise upon the altar of our hearts, beg remission of our sins in His merits who died for us, and receive strength against all the distresses of this troublesome world. Wherefore for man, who oweth so great and many things for benefits received, who so often labour-eth under the burden of his sins, whom so many necessities do environ, what better course than often to approach unto this Divine Mystery? which is, says St. Bernard, physic to the sick; the way to the traveller; strength to the weak; joy to the whole; a refuge to the poor; counsel to the rich; help to them that are in danger; nay, heavenly comfort to the departing soul in the last agony.

It is the manner of merchants to frequent those places where greater hope of gain groweth; the poor are wont to flock thither where larger alms are given; and should not the Christian repair where great and gainful gifts are distributed, when he findeth himself in misery, poor and distressed!

The love of God may move and invite some; the beholding their own miseries should urge others: some the conscience of sin should induce; others, a desire of obtaining grace: but the honour we all owe unto God should solicit all, seeing we have not a more high and excellent means of performing the same.

One friend doth willingly come unto another: it is a sign of small love to Christ, when we come so seldom to His Holy Passover; as on the contrary, His love is augmented more and more in us by often communicating. A great and loving remembrance of His blessed Passion we celebrate in the frequent participation of this Holy Mystery; "so often," saith the apostle, and therefore often, "you shew the Lord's death until He come."*

Last of all, we see in winter, when the sun is farthest off, barrenness followeth: in the coldness of our devotion, when this mystery is neglected, what ensueth but cold love to God and man; yea, and unaptness to all piety.

## THE SEVENTH MEDITATION.

1. Consider, that in the primitive Church, which was governed by the Apostles themselves, the Christians often communicated, which did shew that great devotion and ferventness of spirit did

*1 Corinthians xi. 26.

possess the minds of men; and evident it is, that by how much the more that godly custom did wax more cold, by so much the ferventness and holiness of Christian people did wax less and less.

2. Consider, that by often communicating, piety and perfection of life is augmented, the Christian man is made more religious, the body made chaste and obedient to the soul, the soul to God.

3. Consider, that to receive Christ in the Sacrament with due preparation, is no other thing than to worship Him with great reverence: he, therefore, who by this Divine communicating doth often receive Him, worships Him with Divine honour; and he who honoureth Christ on earth, shall be likewise honoured by His Heavenly Father in Heaven.*

4. Consider, seeing this Divine Sacrament is the meat of the soul, wherewith it is strengthened and maintained in a spiritual life, it doth manifestly follow by how much the more often the soul is nourished with this meat, by so much the more perfect it is made a life spiritual.

5. Consider, saith St. Bernard, *Ser. de Cœna Dominica*, if any do not so often feel so great emotions of anger, envy, carnality, let him think that by often communicating, God makes sound the corruptions of our nature.

* John xii. 26.

### THE FRUIT.

The fruit of this meditation is, to make a firm purpose of applying ourselves to this frequent and often communicating, to beseech the Lord that the soul may never loathe this heavenly food, but with an inward affection desire it; from which affection springeth perseverance, and a readiness to sanctimony and holiness of life, with a longing to walk before the Lord in uprightness, and that Holy hunger and thirst after righteousness which makes the godly blessed.*

### THE SOLILOQUY.

What grace is this, O sweet Jesu, which Thou dost affect me with? for Thou not only vouchsafest to open unto me the precious mine of gold lying in the field of the Holy Church, that is, the hidden treasure, for which the man that found it, sold all that he had to buy that field; but also dost often invite me to dig for so precious a treasure, that Thou mayest enrich my soul. But that which draweth me into admiration is, that to the purchasing of this field, and digging this treasure as often as I will, thou hast added so great a commodity, that I need not sell any of my goods, much less all that I have.

* Matthew v. 6.

Lord, if to obtain this treasure Thou hadst ordained hard fasts, long pilgrimages, shedding of blood, and other sharp penances, all these labours and afflictions ought worthily to have been suffered, to taste even but once Thy sacred Body: but, O love unheard of, that hadst rather make the entrance easy and delectable, that I might often return to this mine! O Adam, how much better is the condition of thy posterity than was thine; which is now brought to pass by the means of our loving and liberal Jesus! Thou wast driven out of Paradise; and that thou shouldest not return thither to eat of the tree of life and live, one of the cherubims, armed with a fiery sword, was set by the righteous God to keep it: we, Thy children, living in the Paradise of Thy Holy Church, are not only not driven away by an Angel with a fiery sword, but are invited of the Lord of Angels, by the fire of His love, to taste often the fruits of the tree of life; yea, to receive Him who hath given all strength to the tree of life, that giveth us a blessed and everlasting life; for so He inviting us hath promised; "He who eateth of this bread shall live forever."*

O, my soul, be somewhat stirred up, and magnify thy God, for He which is mighty hath done great things for thee! Dost thou not see Him that He is made thy treasure to make thee rich? Return

* John vi. 58.

often to dig it; it is a precious treasure, and therefore it will satisfy thy desires; it is infinite, and therefore will never decay, nor be made empty.

## CHAPTER X.

### OF THE IMPEDIMENTS WHICH DETAIN MEN FROM THE BLESSED SACRAMENT.

IN the fifth chapter of Exodus, Pharaoh, to withhold the people of God from doing sacrifice, causeth his task-masters to set them about drudgery.

It is the wiliness of the old serpent to draw us from performing this Holy service unto God, to make the world and the flesh distract our thoughts and desires, so to keep us from this spiritual part of God's Worship, either by a remiss and careless neglect, or at least by a timorous conceit of our unworthiness to approach unto the Table of our Lord.

This careless and remiss neglect ariseth of our many incumbrances and businesses in the world. We can find time to follow profits and pleasures; but to enter into this so serious business of our soul, we are not at leisure; we say, as Felix said to St. Paul, "We will hear of this another time."*

Esau, to satisfy his appetite, left his patrimony:

* Acts xxiv. 25.

the Gergesenes, respecting their swine, neglected Christ's Heavenly Presence. What great indignity was offered unto the rich man,* who prepared a great supper, sent his servants to call them that were bidden to come in, when the unthankful guests returned answer, They were otherwise employed, indeed they cared not for coming at all.

If fear keep any away, because it may seem presumption to approach unto so Holy a place as the Altar of the Lord, let it be remembered, Christ calleth all that be weary and heavy laden, promising to refresh them.† Penitent sinner, these words are Christ's words, because He spake them; and they are thy words, for they are spoken unto thee.

If sloth and negligence draw us back, let a carefulness of our state to come stir us forward in the work of our redemption. Did Christ our Saviour lightly perform the same? No, verily. And shall we lightly regard this His service; *multa dixit*, He said many things, *multa fecit*, He did many things; *multa pertulit*, He suffered many things. And should we either say or do, or suffer little, or nothing at all in His service? God forbid!

If any man find himself cold and slow, without desire and devotion towards this Heavenly meat, he ought not therefore to abstain from it, for he

* Luke xiv. 16. † Matthew xi. 28.

shall here find sensible devotion, when all the powers of the soul, and dispersed appetites, are gathered together, when our will and strength is forcibly carried to God, and we marvellously moved to honour the Passion of our Blessed Saviour.

The impediments therefore considered, we may endeavour then to avoid them, that so we may come and offer our souls and bodies a sacrifice to God, that neither by the subtleness of Satan, the affairs of this world, the pleasures of the flesh, we be drawn away from so High and Heavenly a repast, prepared for us, as is this great Mystery of man's salvation.

## THE EIGHTH MEDITATION.

1. Consider, that the devil cannot endure the use of this profitable Sacrament; for he knoweth how much it is of force to attain blessedness, from whence he for his pride fell. And he hateth the Sacrament, for in it is represented our Saviour's Passion, by force whereof he is thrust from the tyranny which he would exercise upon men.

2. Consider, for what causes the devil doth labour by divers means and arts to withdraw men from often communicating; whence we may gather how profitable this holy Sacrament is to the

soul, when it is manifest, it so much displeaseth Satan, the capital enemy of our souls.

3. Consider, that our nature is of itself prone to evil; how the allurements of the flesh, the affairs of the world, are ready to carry us away from God's service; and, therefore, by so much the more we should the rather shake off all impediments, and receive this Holy Eucharist, whereby we are strengthened to resist temptations, united unto Christ, and armed with His grace, which shall protect and save us.

4. Consider, that whereas the Holy Sacrament is numbered among the greatest benefits given to us of God in this life, that we do in nothing more avoid the tokens of ingratitude, than by often communicating the same benefit. "Do this in remembrance of Me," as if it were a benefit to Him when we benefit ourselves.

5. Consider, how the intermission of this Holy institution doth make men, in time, less religious. This neglect how it proceedeth, for the most part, for want of love; for it cannot be that one should love Christ, and yet neglect His Holy Ordinance.

### THE FRUIT.

The fruit of this meditation is, first, to beg of the Lord an inward affection and devotion to the Holy Sacrament; next, strength against the temp-

tations and allurements which seek to withdraw us from the same.

### THE SOLILOQUY.

Behold, now, O good Jesus, by how many means my infernal enemy endeavoureth to draw me away from Thy Heavenly Table; at one time he assaileth me in the faith of this most Holy and hidden Sacrament; at another time he tortureth me with all scruples; very often he striveth to pull me back for many human respects, and that he may effect his purpose, he laboureth that the world may withdraw me by the affairs thereof; and that the flesh should complain, her repentance and turning unto God is grievous unto her. O, my soul, if there were not an inestimable benefit received by this Holy Sacrament, the devil would not be troublesome unto us; yea, he would rejoice in the time misspent herein: but the enemy of man is not ignorant of the great good that hereby cometh to man.

Now behold, O Lord, the assaults of this adversary of our souls; I desire no other thing of Thee than that Thy servant Job desired and obtained. Place me by Thee, and let the hand of whomsoever fighteth against me, do me no harm. Stand on my part, O Lord, and I shall be safe.

None shall stay me from frequenting this Hea-

venly Sacrament. I pray Thee, therefore, my merciful Jesus, that like as Thou hast inspired me by Thy merciful goodness, that I might beg the taste of this precious meat; so Thou mayest bestow on me grace to frequent the same with joyful perseverance. Cause, O Lord, that the memory and desire of this Holy Sacrament fall not from me, otherwise I know that my heart will wax faint, and I shall be constrained to say with the prophet, "My heart is withered within me, that I forget to eat my bread." Let not the distrust of mine own vileness deter and fray me from such a Heavenly meat, so full of comfort; to which humble desire, Lord, give Thy blessed grant. Amen.

## THE NINTH MEDITATION.

*That to abstain from the Sacrament, without just cause, is an impediment unto our spiritual profit.*

Many there are in the world, who upon carelessness and negligence are not willing to give over worldly business, or to take pains to prepare themselves for this special part of the service of God, abstain from the Holy Sacrament. Others complain they want sensible devotion; and so not finding themselves so fit as they would wish themselves, give over to approach unto this Holy Mystery. A third sort pretend they are not, and can-

not be, in perfect charity. A miserable case it is, that men should for mean and transitory things neglect Heavenly; nay, that which is most lamentable, that they should in a manner study to persuade themselves there is no God, because they would take no pains to serve Him; neglecting all religious duties, and almost willing their souls should become like the souls of beasts, mortal and corruptible: that men should be so blind as to hurt themselves, because their enemies hurt them!

To work the beginning of a better alteration in these men's minds, let them consider whose creatures they are; why God has sent them hither; what He will require of them when they are departed hence.

Now for human respects to neglect any longer our services due unto God, amongst which this of the Sacrament is most excellent, it is a great indignity, where God Himself is a party. Who would care for the coarse diet of Egypt, that may have manna from Heaven? We should be careful not so much what we now do, as what one day we may wish we had done.

As for those who, upon an opinion of their own unfitness and unworthiness, approach not unto this Holy Communion, or rather for that they have no spiritual hunger, but are dull and lumpish, having no desire at all; that have no fervour or devotion, but are dry and cold; it may be said of them, "Holy

Father, forgive them, they know not what they do."

When any find these wants and defects in themselves, as many do, they ought to consider what they ought to do, for fear of further peril: they should not be discouraged, but remember to serve God, not only in prosperity, that is, when He sends them joyful and gladsome motions; but also in times of adversity, or when He sends them sorrowful. Let them know that voluntary want of fervour, which cometh of negligence, is the default, and not that which sometimes feeleth not sensible devotion: to have desire and good-will to serve God in this coldness, is much acceptable, and sheweth that fidelity and loyalty we owe to God. For scruples of not being in charity, and the like, we ought not to abstain from the Holy Communion for every light cause, but to call to mind for Whose sake it is we are to love our very enemies.

Be it thou art wretched, and miserable, and unworthy of all good, thou oughtest not therefore to depart from this Holy Table, but rather with the more desire to fly unto God, considering he is that Lord who accepteth a sorrowful spirit, as a sacrifice offered unto Him; that He is the same now in Heaven that He was when He was conversant on earth. See in the Gospel, He never rejected any sinner, or distressed creature that would come unto

Him. He rejected not the publican; He rejected not Mary Magdalen; He rejected not the woman with the issue of blood: yea, we read that the blind, the lame, and all that were diseased, came unto Him, and that He cured them all: yea, when they could not come to Him, He was content to go to them.

And here we have further to note that to come worthily and with due reverence unto this Holy Sacrament, may be understood two manner of ways; one is conformable unto the dignity of the Lord Whom we receive, and in this sort cometh none worthily; no, though he should bestow all his time in preparing himself so long as the world shall endure; another manner to come worthily, and with due reverence, is in respect of that which God doth require at our hands, which is, to come in faith and repentance, and judging ourselves, purposing to lead a new life, and to walk from henceforth in God's Holy laws: it is in our preparing, as it is in our alms, not according to that a man hath not, but according to that he hath; in that as much as we can there is nothing wanting.

## CHAPTER XI.

A CONFERENCE BETWEEN THE SOUL AND FAITH.

SOUL. Shall I be so bold with Obed Edom, as to approach this sacred ark, and to receive the same into my house?

*Faith.* Why mayest thou not be so bold?

*Soul.* Because I am weak, miserable, and ill inclined.

*Faith.* He who cometh unto thee is both the physician and the medicine. He Himself hath said, "The whole need no physician, but the sick." He is the man in the Gospel that made a great supper, and bade guests to come in and to take part of it.*

*Soul.* If John the Baptist sanctified even in his mother's womb, reputed himself unworthy to loose the latchets of Christ's shoes: and St. Peter, thinking himself unworthy of His presence, said, Go from me, O Lord, for I am a sinful creature; how shall I, miserable sinner, dare to receive unto me so high a Mystery?

*Faith.* If He descended from heaven to save

* Luke xiv. 16.

sinners, if He call unto Him all that are weary and heavy laden, shall He not accept of thee if thou come, Himself calling thee to come?

*Soul.* What shall make me secure from punishment?

*Faith.* Humility and love. By humility thou shalt be exalted; by love thou shalt be rewarded. Come, therefore, unto Him by this Holy mean left unto thee.

*Soul.* But if the Bethshemites,* were so sharply punished for looking into the ark, how may I presume to receive the Lord of the ark Himself?

*Faith.* The Bethshemites were worthily punished, for they looked into the ark from curiosity; they did not honour and reverence it as they ought to have done. Wherefore, if thou hast humility and love, thou needest not fear the punishment of the Bethshemites.

*Soul.* But I cannot choose, but acknowledge with the centurion, that I am not worthy to receive Christ under my roof.

*Faith.* The Lord maketh them worthy who acknowledge their own unworthiness; wherefore, with all humble submission say, O Lord Jesus, I come unto Thee, beseeching Thee to turn away Thine eye from my sins; if Thou wilt behold them, behold them Lord, not as a judge to punish

* 1 Samuel vi. 19.

them, but as a physician, to cure them. Cause, I beseech Thee, that my infirmities may happen to Thy greater glory, as the infirmity of him did that was born blind.* Thou, delivering me a sinner, by so much the more shall Thy glory shine, by how much the more I am unworthy and miserable.

* John ix. 3.

## CHAPTER XII.

### ANOTHER DIALOGUE BETWEEN THE DISTRESSED SINNER AND FAITH.

SINNER. I am not worthy to approach unto so high a place as the Table of the Lord, and, therefore I come so seldom as I do.

*Faith.* Didst thou do this of true humility, and not of negligence rather, it were well. But I doubt thou dost it of sloth, because thou wilt not take pains to repent as thou oughtest.

*Sinner.* The very truth is I am afraid.

*Faith.* Why, man? let the love of Him who so lovingly calleth thee banish fear.

*Sinner.* But I am sinful in my own conscience, conscious to myself of sin.

*Faith.* Who can say his heart is clean? all have sinned, and all have gone astray.

*Sinner.* But my sins are grievous, and, therefore, I absent myself.

*Faith.* Are they grievous? And therefore thou shouldest rather seek a remedy where it may be had.

*Sinner.* But I have not sensible devotion to seek.

*Faith.* Though we cannot be as strong as Sam-

son, we must not let all alone. Christ will accept a good heart.

*Sinner.* But I cannot so well dispose myself, yet by reason of the affairs of this world.

*Faith.* God willeth us by His Apostle St. Peter, to cast all care of earthly things upon Him, because we should cast our care about Heavenly.

*Sinner.* But may I be so bold as to come and be partaker of so Holy a Mystery?

*Faith.* Thou mayest; and therefore prepare faith and a penitent heart, and come in the name of God. Here is the wine that makes glad the heart of man; what better comfort than from the Comforter Himself? comfort thyself, therefore, in God, let Him be thy only comfort. So be it.

## CHAPTER XIII.

### A SPIRITUAL COMPLAINT OF THE SOUL.

WHAT shall I do, my sweet Jesus! for two most strong captains do greatly assault me, that is to say, Fear and Love. Fear objecteth to my mind the highness of this most Divine Sacrament, which doth make me draw back my foot; but Love sheweth me the excellency which this admirable Mystery doth procure, and makes me that with pleasant desire I dare go on, and come into Thy sight. O my Saviour, what shall I do! if, overcome with fear, I depart further from Thy Holy Table, when Thou hast said, "Unless ye eat of the flesh of the Son of man, you shall not have life in you."

If I be overcome with love, shall I be so bold without fear to receive the sacrament of so great a Majesty? What then shall I do, O my Saviour! I know well the one cannot please thee without the other: for seeing Thou art our Father, love is worthily due unto Thee; and seeing Thou art our Lord, fear and reverence.

Wherefore I determine to give my diligence to both, to receive both into my company. Love shall cause that I come often and willingly; Fear that I come reverently and with diligent preparation. And Thou my most gentle Redeemer, seeing Thou vouchsafest to invite me so often to Thy sacred feast, bring to pass that these two captains may not forsake me. O my Heavenly Father, for that Thou hast bound me with so many benefits unto Thee, and tied me with so great bonds of love, I beseech Thee by the same love which Thou dost always bear towards Thine only begotten and beloved Son, that Thou wilt not leave me so bound, but rather draw me to Thy Son, seeing Thou hast promised it to me by the prophet Hosea, when Thou sayest, "I will draw them unto Me with chains of love." Remember also, O my blessed Saviour, that Thou hast promised this drawing, when Thou saidst, "When I am lifted up from the earth, I will draw all things unto Myself." Now, O Lord, Thou art exalted, it remaineth that Thou draw my heart unto Thee; and when it cannot find where it may rest, like the dove, it may return to Thee, the ark of salvation. But if Thou, O Lord, dost not stretch forth Thy hand to draw it unto Thee into the ark, it shall stay without doors, and soon perish in the waters. Lord Jesus, receive me in, and I shall be safe. "Say unto my soul, I am thy salvation."*

* Psalm xxxv. 3.

## CHAPTER XIV.

OF RENOUNCING DANGEROUS IMPEDIMENTS, WHICH HINDER THE WORTHY RECEIVING OF THIS HOLY SACRAMENT.

THERE is, saith the Wise Man, a word cloth-ed with death; God grant that it be not found in the house of Israel! And there is too, saith the Apostle, an unworthy receiving of Christ unto condemnation:* and God grant it be not found amongst the Israel of Christ? That which is to some the savour of life unto life, and these are the worthy receivers; the same may be unto others the savour of death unto death, and these are the unworthy.

What is, therefore, more needful than to remove all dangerous impediments, which may hinder the fruit and efficacy of so high a Mystery, as to purge us of the leaven of sin and malice, of all sensual desires, faithless cogitations, impenitent affections, and all other evils whatsoever, which may withdraw the heart of man from God, and hinder the good of this sovereign medicine of our souls?

*1 Corinthians xi. 27.

The sun to them which are in health is pleasant and wholesome, but unto those who are pained in the head it falleth out to be far otherwise. A potion received in due season doth help the patient. The showers and dews of Heaven make the tree well planted to prosper and fructify; but that tree which has some worm at the root, and doth wither upward, doth more and more decay for all this moisture. The soul rooted in faith and charity is a good plant, which this Heavenly dew doth nourish: a corrupt conscience is that worm which maketh the withered tree to fade away, so long until the master of the vineyard say, "Cut down the unprofitable tree, why cumbereth it the ground?" Now therefore, that the faithful Christian may be as the tree planted by the water's side, which shall bring forth his fruit in due season, let him in the name of God remove all dangerous impediments, as envy, evil concupiscence, infidelity, and the like: that he eat not of this Bread, and drink not of this Cup of the Lord unworthily.

## THE TENTH MEDITATION.

1. Consider, that the old Israelites did not receive manna, so long as there remained in their houses the leaven of Egypt; so, so long as sinful desires remain in our hearts, we receive not as we ought to receive our heavenly manna.

2. Consider, that to come unworthily to the Holy Eucharist, as without faith, without devotion, without repentance, without reverence, is very dangerous.

3. Consider, how respectful we should be in coming to this Holy Mystery, how careful, how religious.

4. Solomon saith, "When thou sittest to eat with a ruler, consider diligently what is set before thee."*

5. Abraham, when he was making his offering to God,† the fowls came to hinder Abraham's offering, as wandering thoughts would do ours: Abraham arose, and drove them away.

6. Ahimelech asked David if his men were cleansed, before they were permitted to eat of the shew-bread.‡

7. God said to Moses, "Put off thy shoes, for the place where thou standest is Holy ground."‖

## THE FRUIT.

The fruit of this meditation is, to prepare ourselves in the best and most reverent manner we can, that we eat not *Panem Domini contra Dominum*, the Bread of the Lord against the Lord, as St. Austin speaketh; to remove all dangerous

* Prov. xxiii. 1. † Gen. xv. 11. ‡ 1 Sam. xxi. 4. ‖ Exod. iii. 5.

impediments, to be sorry for our sins past, and resolve upon amendment for the time to come.

### THE SOLILOQUY.

Seest thou not, my soul, that it is thy part to come with all devotion and attention of mind to this Holy Sacrament? Remember, that when God was to talk with Moses upon the mount, how he commanded that neither Man nor beast should approach the mountain,* lest Moses by the sight of any creature should be disturbed: yea, that he should have fitter opportunity of attention without distraction, the whole hill was covered with a great and dark cloud, the multitude were commanded to sanctify themselves, yea, to wash their very clothes.

No otherwise, my soul, do thou, that no evil affection come with thee unto the Holy Altar, which may draw thee from devotion; here God doth expect thee. Consider with thyself, that He can never be truly desired, and loved of thee, unless in coming to this sacred Table thou clean forget all earthly things. Hear what the Kingly prophet saith; "My daughter, hearken and consider, incline thine ear, forget also thine own people, and thy father's house; so shall the King have pleasure in thy beauty, for He is Thy Lord God,

* Exodus xix. 13.

and worship thou Him."* But, O Lord, what shall I do to attain this devotion! for my mind doth remain so corrupt, since that general fall of our first father, Adam, that oftentimes against my will it wandereth vagrant where it should not. What shall I do! when my infernal enemy endeavoureth by many earthly occasions, to draw me away from this Heavenly Table, and to come (which is no less fearful) unworthily unto the same. Thou seest, O merciful Jesus, in what state I stand, that is to say, how weak I am by nature; help, I beseech Thee, my weakness with Thy holy grace, that all defects removed, I may approach unto Thy Heavenly table with heart and soul prepared.

* Psalm xlv. 10, 11.

## CHAPTER XV.

### OF PREPARING OURSELVES BEFORE WE COME TO THE MOST HOLY SACRAMENT.

IF in our earthly affairs we oftentimes forget Heavenly, good reason it is that in our Heavenly we should much rather forget all earthly, and prepare ourselves for this so solemn a Sacrifice, which doth consecrate man unto God.

Christ sent two of His Disciples before to make ready the upper room, where He would keep His Maundy with His Apostles; our faith and repentance, as two messengers, must prepare beforehand the upper rooms of our souls.

When God appeared unto His servant Moses in the bush, He willed him to put off his shoes, because the place was Holy; "The place where thou standest," saith He, "is Holy ground."

The Israelites keeping their Passover, put leaven out of their houses. Christ washeth His Disciples' feet before He did eat with them, or they with Him. Say St. Peter what he will, we have need to be washed. The prophet David saith, "I

will wash my hands in innocency, and so will go to Thine Altar."* Esther coming to find grace and favour in the sight of Ahasuerus, first humbleth herself by fasting and prayer; Jacob coming for a blessing, putteth on Esau's garment. We are approaching to the Lord's Altar, we are coming for a blessing, seeking favour; what should we do else but wash our hearts by faith in the Blood of the Lamb, humble our souls by fasting before we participate of the Blessed Sacrament, as if we will serve God before we serve ourselves, and so come and take unto us the garment of Christ's Righteousness.

Again, it behoveth every one that will safely come to this Table of the Lord, to direct all his affections and desires to God only; to do nothing, to affect nothing, but God's pleasure respected.

For him that will rightly be partaker of this Holy Mystery;

1. Faith is necessary, whereby he believeth remission of his sins in Christ's merits.

2. Repentance is necessary, whereby he acknowledgeth the greatness of his sin, judgeth himself; and judging himself, he shall not be judged of God.

3. Charity is required, whereby the mind is at peace and quiet with God and men: and he that dwelleth in charity, saith St. John, dwelleth in

* Psalm xxvi. 6.

God, and God in him: dwelleth in God, what more secure? and God in him, what more sweet?

4. Attention must be had that he be not carried away from respective devotion, and chiefly from the meditation of Christ's Passion, His descent into hell, His resurrection the third day, His ascension up into Heaven, His glorious sitting at the right hand of God, from whence he shall come at the end of the world to judge both the quick and dead.

5. Constancy is necessary, or a resolution to be constant; for he hath said, "Be thou faithful unto death, and I will give thee a crown of life."*

## THE ELEVENTH MEDITATION.

1. Consider, how busy and careful Martha was to receive Christ into her house;† and therefore much more careful should every one be to receive Him into his heart.

2. Consider, what reverence and devotion is meet, by that of the Prophet, spoken of Christ's entrance into Heaven: "Be ye lifted up ye everlasting gates, and the King of Glory shall come in."‡

3. Consider, that to entertain an earthly prince, all things are made decent and clean.

4. Consider, it was said to him that came to the

*Rev. ii. 10. †Luke x. 40. ‡Psalm xxiv. 9.

marriage feast after an unseemly manner, "Friend, how camest thou hither, and hast not on a wedding garment?"*

5. Consider, that the Apostle St. Peter, when Christ would wash his feet, thought himself unworthy that so great honour should be done unto him.

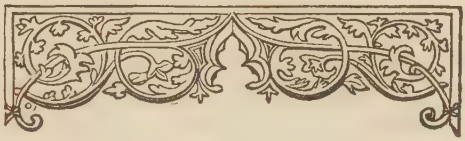
### THE FRUITS OF THIS MEDITATION.

The first is to prepare us with all humble reverence, but chiefly to offer unto God the sacrifice of a broken and contrite heart; that as His Body was broken for us, so should our hearts be broken by contrition for our sins.

The second is, to cry out with the Prophet, *Crea in me Domine, novum cor:* "Create in me, O Lord, a new heart."

The third is, to become surveyors of ourselves; and call a little consistory in our own souls.

*Matthew xxii. 12.



## CHAPTER XVI.

A FORM OF CONFESSING OUR SINS, BEFORE WE COME TO RECEIVE THE MOST HOLY SACRAMENT.

O LORD, Thou art not wont to drive away sinners, but callest them, and convertest them to Thee. Thou art He that hast said, "Come all that are weary and heavy laden."*

It was publicly spoken of Thee, that Thou didst receive publicans and sinners, and didst eat with them. O my Lord, Thou art now at the Throne of Mercy, and therefore hast not changed Thy nature, which Thou hadst sometime here in the world. O my Lord, Thou still calledst them from Heaven whom Thou didst once call on earth: wherefore, comforted with this remembrance of Thy love, I come unto Thee laden, and labouring, and burdened with my sins. I come as the sick to the physician, beseeching Thee to heal me; as a sinner to the wellspring of life, beseeching Thee to revive me: I acknowledge, I acknowledge my great unworthiness.

If thine own Holy Apostle, or as he seemed,

* Matthew xi. 28.

prince of the Apostles, could cry out and say, "Go from me, O Lord, for I am a sinful man," how much more shall I, who am the chief of sinners, say, I am not worthy to whom thou shouldst come: nay, I am not worthy to come unto Thee, much less to receive Thee?

It was lawful for none to taste of the shewbread, which was only a shadow of this profound Mystery, but only for him who was clean and sanctified: how shall I eat thereof, who am so far removed from cleanliness.

It was so great an offence to touch Thy sacred ark, that Uzzah stretching out his hand to touch it was suddenly stricken.* How can I not then but fear and tremble!

O Lord, as I fear the greatness, so do I also fear the multitude of my sins. I am that fool, that "said in his heart, There is no God."† I lived so dissolutely, as if (by manners I professed as much) I feared not Thy justice, I dreaded not to transgress Thy laws, I rendered not thanks as I ought. What other thing hath my life been, than a daily war against Thee? What other thing have I done by my sins, and careless coming unto this mystery in former times, than offered Thee open wrong, stricken Thy Blessed Head with a reed? My sins have been the spear that goaded Thee, the thorns that pierced Thee: how therefore shall I

*2 Samuel vi. 7. †Psalm xiv. 1.

be so bold as to come unto Thee? Shall I repose Thy sacred Body in a den of dragons, a nest of scorpions! What other thing is a soul full of sin? Wherefore dost Thou cast Thy children's bread unto the dogs, and Thy precious margarite to swine? How wilt Thou rest with me, O my Lord, who art the purity of a virgin, the fountain of all pulchritude? Thy most Holy Body taken from the Cross, was wrapped in fine linen, laid in a new sepulchre, wherein never any was laid: but what part of my soul is clean? what new? How then shall I receive Thee, O my Saviour and Redeemer? I am ashamed so often as I behold myself in such a state; I blush, considering what I am, and whither I am about to come. My refuge is, to fly unto Thy mercy, according to which mercy, O Lord, look upon me. Did the stones cleave asunder when Thou sufferedst Thy Passion; and shall my stony heart be nothing moved, for whom Thou didst suffer? Did the earth move, and shall my earthly mind stand immoveable, like a dead centre? No, no, I am moved, O my Saviour!

### ANOTHER FORM OF CONFESSION.

Take it not heinously, O my Lord, that being such a one as Thou seest me to be, I dare presume,

to come into Thy sight. I remember, Thou wast not offended with the poor woman which had the issue of blood, but didst accept of her, saying, "Be of good comfort, daughter, thy Faith hath made thee whole."* I have a greater issue, and come to Thee to be cured.

I call to mind Mary Magdalen, who washed Thy feet with her tears, and wiped them with the hair of her head. Behold, here lieth a sinner, who hath more sins, but fewer tears; she was not the first, nor the last, whom Thy mercy received.—Receive me, O Lord, though I have not shed so many tears as may wash Thy feet, yet hast Thou shed as much blood as can wash away my sins.—O my Lord, Thou hast not changed Thy office and nature, though Thou seemest to be far away.

I read in the Holy Gospel, that all that were sick and diseased did resort unto Thee, and that the multitude sought to touch Thee, for there went virtue from Thee.† The lepers came unto Thee, and Thou, stretching forth Thy blessed hands, didst heal Them; Thou gavest unto the blind their sight, unto the lame their limbs; Thou didst cure the sick, dispossess the devil, raise the dead, and canst Thou now forget to shew mercy, Who art mercy itself? I come unto Thee, O my Redeemer, I come unto Thee, O eternal Creator, of Heaven and Earth, beseeching Thee, that as the Holy King Da-

* Matthew ix. 22. † Luke vi. 19.

vid did accept at his table, and shew favour unto Mephibosheth,* though of himself deformed; yet for the love of Jonathan, of whom he was descended, willing thereby to honour the son for the father's sake; so may it please Thee to admit me, though of myself most deformed, for the love of Him in Whom Thou art well pleased.

I offer unto Thee, O Lord, a humble heart; and had I many hearts, I could offer them all unto Thee. Lord, I can be no more without Thee, nor live without Thee, than can this body of mine remain, when life is taken from it. Wherefore necessity driveth me unto Thee, and hope of mercy ministereth boldness, by how much the more unworthy I am, by so much the more art Thou glorified in shewing mercy to me, Thy poor and unworthy servant.

* 2 Samuel ix. 11.

## CHAPTER XVII.

### A MEDITATION OF THESE WORDS, WHENCE COMETH THIS, THAT MY LORD COMETH UNTO ME.

HE bringeth himself that sendeth not another. He Who hath so many spirits, His ministers, cometh Himself unto His servants; He visiteth His sick, lifteth up and comforteth the fallen, helpeth the afflicted, refresheth the hungry with His own Body and Blood, who aboundeth with so many, so divers means and medicines, as to whom the fullness of the earth doth appertain. He bringeth Himself unto Thee, O my soul, as a father, when He pursueth thee with love, as a brother when he maketh thee by adoption the Son of God; as a fellow, when he appointeth thee a co-heir of His heavenly kingdom; as a Heavenly repast for thy eternal comfort; and an intercessor for the remission of thy sins. O, the wonderful love of the Son of God. *Unde venit?* from whence cometh this, that my Lord cometh unto me?

## CHAPTER XVIII.

A MEDITATION UPON THESE WORDS OF THE CENTURION: NON SUM DIGNUS UT INTRES SUB TECTUM MEUM; LORD, I AM NOT WORTHY THAT THOU SHOULDEST ENTER UNDER MY ROOF.

O LORD, hadst Thou rather be at another man's house with dishonour, than at Thine own with honour? At least, O good Jesu, if Thou hadst no respect of Thine honour, if Thou castest under foot all praise and renown, if Thou takest unto Thee every vile sinner, yet have regard to Thy estate. Lord, I confess "I am not worthy that Thou shouldest come under my roof." Thou knowest my poverty and need; I have this poor cottage, far unmeet to entertain so great a guest as Thou, O my Lord. This body is not compact of gold and silver, but of dust and ashes; and also subject to infirmities, diseases, and death. This soul, joined to my body, is far from that holiness

it should be endued with, far unmeet a place it is for such a personage. I am altogether confounded, I tremble and shake at the coming of so great a guest into so poor a house as my soul is.

## CHAPTER XIX.

A MEDITATION UPON THESE WORDS, TANTUM DIC VERBUM ET SANABITUR ANIMA MEA; BUT ONLY SAY THE WORD, AND MY SOUL SHALL LIVE.

AND art Thou ignorant, O my Lord, who Thou art? What a one and how great? Thou art God Omnipotent, Thou Lord of all; Thou art the Creator of Heaven and Earth, and whatsoever is contained in the vast compass thereof. Thou hast raised me up, as all other things else, of nothing; Thou hast clothed me with this body, and hast given me in my first creation a right and righteous soul; Thou hast restored this soul, fallen from the state of innocency; Thou hast illuminated it by grace and washed it in the Sacred font of Baptism. O my Lord, Thou art He that rulest and governest me; Thou wouldest for my sake become man, die for me, suffer for me the very death of the Cross; so much could love and charity prevail with Thee; Lord, Thy grace is sufficient. And wilt Thou turn then into my house, to refresh my faint soul; to cure me, being weak, and heal me, being sick.—

Will not the only word suffice, wherewith Thou hast cleansed the lepers, dispossessed the devils, raised the dead? It will suffice, O my Lord; the centurion said unto Thee, "I am not worthy that Thou shouldest come under my roof."* *Dic verbum et sanabitur servus meus:* so say I unto thee, *Dic verbum et sanabitur anima mea;* "say the word, and my soul shall be healed."

Matthew viii. 8.

## CHAPTER XX.

A MEDITATION UPON THESE WORDS: VENIAM ET CURBO EUM; I WILL COME AND CURE HIM.

IF it please Thee so, neither wilt Thou have it otherwise; behold thy servant be it unto me according to Thy word. Come down, Lord Jesu, or ever my soul dieth. Now a way lieth open unto thee, O my soul, I will shew thee great joy; rejoice and be glad, for thy Creator cometh unto thee; thy Saviour cometh unto thee, who hath fought with thine enemies, sustained wounds, spent His life for thee: behold how he desireth to enlarge thee with the most ample gift of His most blessed Divinity. Where wilt thou lay up these things, O my soul? How great is He to whom the thrones and dominions serve; on Whom the Holy Host of Heaven doth attend?

O my soul, admire the wonderful piety and ineffable dignity with which He hasteth to visit thee, and maketh speed to come unto thee! but arise, run forth to meet Him, hasten this meeting, rejoice

and congratulate for the coming of such a guest: cry with a devout heart, "Lord, what is man, that Thou art so mindful of him!"*

## THE SOLILOQUY ON THESE WORDS: FROM WHENCE COMETH IT?

Lord, how much dost thou submit Thyself, while Thou dost not disdain to enter into the vile cottage of my soul! It was sufficient for Thy love, to be born for me in a stable. That Thou descendest from Heaven to rest in the womb of the blessed Virgin, was not such a marvel, for it was the womb of a most pure creature. O holy Elizabeth, who being visited and saluted by the Mother of Thy Lord, considering the dignity of this Majesty, didst say, "Whence cometh this unto me, that the Mother of my Lord cometh to me?" Therefore what shall I say, to whom the Lord Himself cometh, by infinite parts far above the Virgin Mary? He cometh unto me, not only to visit me, but also to unite me to Him, and enrich me with Heavenly gifts. O my soul, I greatly rejoice that thou hast delivered to Jesus of thine own will, the government and possession of thyself; but understand that by this act thou art bound to proclaim open war to all sins, the capital enemies of the Lord, to Whom thou art delivered; neither canst thou any more,

* Psalm viii. 4.

without manifest offence of rebellion, give an entrance of sin into thine house, now dedicated unto Christ. O my soul, enter into consideration, see with what bond of re-loving Jesus, Who hath loved thee first, thou art bound. O God, how unlike are Thy doings to the actions of the princes of this world.

King Hezekiah, that he might declare his favour unto the ambassadors of the King of Babel shewed them all his riches and treasures,* not giving them any part thereof. Thou dost, O our most gracious Lord, not only show us Thy treasures, but freely bestowest them upon us. I see not, O my soul, how thou art able to recompense so great good-will, only yield thyself wholly to the love of thy Redeemer: for it cannot be that thou shouldest serve two masters. It cannot be that the ark of God and the idol of Dagon† should stand in one temple. If thou prostrate thyself to the love of creatures, thou shalt undergo a hard servitude; but if thou follow Christ, thou shalt find rest and quiet. O my soul, we were created to serve and worship God: what higher part of His worship, than to come and be partakers of His Deity! O my soul be prepared!

* 2 Kings xx. 13. † 1 Samuel v. 4.

## CHAPTER XXI.

A MEDITATION UPON THAT WHICH ST. PAUL TEACHETH IN 1 CORINTHIANS xi. 28.

CONSIDER that the Apostle, in the preparation to the most Holy Communion, requireth three things; the first is, that the communicant examine his own conscience, which is signified in these words, "Let a man prove himself, and so let him eat of this Bread, and drink of this Cup." If he find his conscience defiled with sin, let him make a humble and penitent confession of the same.

Secondly, the apostle would that the Holy Eucharist be received worthily, otherwise the danger is great, for he who with a corrupt mind and evil intention approacheth unto the Lord's Table, eateth and drinketh his own judgment.

Thirdly, St. Paul would that a difference be made between these Holy Elements, consecrated to a most Divine use, and the profane repasts of the body only.

For the first of these, let a man prove or examine himself. In proving or examining himself, first he is to consider whether he stand in the true faith of Christ, be sorry for his sins past, have a purpose to lead a new life for the time to come.

Secondly, in proving himself he must go over all the ages of his life, all places wherein he hath lived, all companies wherein he hath conversed, to what faults he hath been most inclined, and so rip up his sins past as so many scars, and then go to Christ, the Physician that will cure them all.

Thirdly, let him endeavour to be a worthy receiver, coming with all humility, both of body and mind.

Let him take heed that he put a difference between the Bread and Wine in this most Holy Sacrament, and that which is common.

Why in the old Law was the lamb brought home four days before it was offered? Sure that trial might be first made, whether or no he were fit to be offered.

Why was the Passover eaten in the habit of pilgrims? To shew that at this celebration we should call to mind that we are but pilgrims in this world.

Why was it eaten with staves in their hands, and in haste? With staves, weak men need staves, especially the staff of faith; in haste, because we are in the way wherein we have no long continuance.

## CHAPTER XXII.

A MEDITATION UPON THAT OF THE PRODIGAL SON, WHEN HE WAS RECEIVED OF HIS FATHER.—LUKE XV. 20.

THOSE three things before instituted, which the Apostle requireth in our preparation to the Lord's Supper, may be considered in the receiving home into his father's house of the prodigal son.

First, he feeleth with grief his own misery; he acknowledges his own unthriftiness; confesseth his sins, whereby inclusively he craveth pardon; which done, his father receiveth him.

Secondly, he is clothed with a new garment, the best in the wardrobe, which may signify the clothing of righteousness, "which is made white in the blood of the Lamb."*

After all, he sitteth down at the table, eateth the fat calf, and because he was pined with misery, he had music to revive his spirits, and so he is received home with much joy.

* Rev. vii. 14.

THE SOLILOQUY UPON THIS PREPARATION.

Lord, although thy Apostle had never mentioned the purity of conscience which is required in coming to this Divine Sacrament, who would not judge that Thou, the Fountain of all purity, oughtest to be received with a pure and clean heart? O most merciful Lord, how little dost Thou require of us to eat of that Lamb that taketh away the sins of the world!

The Jews, to eat their Paschal Lamb, which was but a shadow and figure of this, "ought to provide them a lamb of a year old,* without blemish, which wasted by fire, should be eaten with sweet bread and wild lettuce, with their loins girt, with their shoes on their feet. But unto the eating of this true Lamb, which taketh away the sins of the world, we come with the sweet bread, to wit, the assured hope of delight, having our loins girt with chastity, our feet shod with pious affections, because our passage is by stony places; though the way be hard, the end of the way will be joyous.

Oh how true it is, my loving Jesus, which Thou hast said of Thy Law; "My yoke is sweet, and My burden light."†

Yea, truly, so light and sweet, that if there were

* Exodus xii. 5. † Matthew xi. 30.

not some that would imagine a labour in the precept, it should not deserve the name of a burden or yoke.

O my soul, now thou seest to how few things Christ hath bound thee, and how he hath given thee abundance of His grace in this life, by the benefit of this most Holy Sacrament, and will give thee in the other life eternal glory; only take heed to thyself, that seeing the Lord of His infinite goodness hath given thee so easily this inestimable commodity, thou dost not again relapse into evil.

Consider earnestly what thou shouldest do? Not to receive regardfully so gentle a Lord Who cometh to enrich thee with His gifts, were great inhumanity, very pernicious unto thyself; but to receive Him unworthily by thy default were mere slothfulness, which procureth injury to Him, and punishment unto thyself.

Thou shalt do well to imitate the example of the poor countryman, who understanding that the king would rest in his house, removed all things which he thought might offend the king's eyes, did very diligently sweep all his house, and although he could not beautify it according to the worthiness of such a guest, yet he did as much as he was able, to receive him in seemly and decent manner. He goeth to meet the king with all speed, receiveth him with great joy, giveth him many thanks for

this so great favour. If then, so many things are done to an earthly king, what wilt thou do, O my soul, to the King of kings, who cometh not to live at thy cost, but to impart his good gifts unto thee.

Labour, therefore, in cleansing and decking thyself; hang the chamber or upper room of thy best devotion with the tapestry of holiness, and welcome Him with love, who of love saith, "My delight is to be with the sons of men."*

The Shunamite saith unto her husband, "There is a holy man that used to go by us; let us make him a little chamber, and set him there a bed, and a table, and a stool, and a candlestick; and it shall be that when he cometh unto us, he shall turn in thither."† So Christ coming by us, let us make him a chamber of humility, a bed of charity, where He may rest, a table where He may take His repast, a stool where He may sit by us, a candlestick of holy meditation, which may give light unto the house of our souls, that so as He passeth by He may turn in, and make his abode with us.

* Prov. viii. 31. † 2 Kings iv. 9, 10.

## CHAPTER XXIII.

### A MEDITATION FOR THE DAY WE ARE TO COMMUNICATE.

IN what day you are to communicate, as soon as you are awake early in the morning, think that the Lord doth expect you this day at His Heavenly Table, think of putting on the inward ornaments of the soul, as faith, repentance, devotion, charity, humbleness of mind, and such like.

1. Consider, how Christ in His conception took our nature, and that we in this spiritual conception of Him, are to participate in His nature.

2. Consider, you are to receive Him this day in the state of grace, who shall one day receive you in the state of glory.

3. Consider, that of the first eating it was said, "That day thou eatest, thou shalt die;" but by this eating, "That day thou eatest, thou shalt live."*

4. Esteem thyself unworthy, and say, Sweet Jesus, what love is this Thou pursuest me withal! Behold, Lord, I prepare myself this day to receive

* John v. 51.

Thee into the poor cottage of a humble heart: but alas, the wise man, Solomon himself, when he had in many years, and by much cost, built Thee a temple,* did notwithstanding marvel that Thou, the God of all Majesty, wouldest vouchsafe to abide and dwell in it: what shall I say, who have bestowed so little pains, so small cost, in preparing Thee a temple? I beseech Thee to turn my soul into a house of prayer, and to whip out all evil affections, that it may be rightly said to be, *domus tua*, Thy house.

5. Now "Holiness," saith the Psalmist, "becometh Thy house for ever."

* 1 Kings, viii.

## CHAPTER XXIV.

### A MEDITATION UPON THE HISTORY OF ZACCHÆUS. LUKE XIX.

ZACCHÆUS, desirous to see Jesus, but for that he was of a low stature, he could not for the press, wherefore he goeth up into a sycamore tree, where Christ should pass by.

2. Christ passeth by, and casting His merciful eyes on Zacchæus, said, "Zacchæus, make haste to come down, for to-day I must abide in thy house." He came down then rejoicing, and receiveth Him into his house, thinking himself greatly rewarded.

3. The Jews, when they saw Christ turn into the house of a sinner, murmured; which Zacchæus perceiving, turning to Christ he saith, "Behold, Lord, half of my goods I give to the poor; and if I have defrauded any man, I restore fourfold. Jesus answering, saith, Salvation is come unto thine house." Think of Zacchæus; though little in body, great in example; rich in goods, but richer in goodness; emptying his house of earthly

riches, but filling it with Heavenly; giving not to them that can give again, but to the poor, who had not to give again; think how he dealt wisely, proving his own will, making his own hands his executors, his own eyes his overseers.

### THE APPLICATION OF THIS HISTORY.

That thou mayest be partaker of salvation, which is offered in this Sacrament, it is necessary that thou be desirous to know and taste Christ, Who is after a Heavenly manner contained in the same. And to know Him, it is necessary, first, that thou lift up thy mind on high, and consider His greatness, keeping in the meanwhile the ground under thy feet, as Zacchæus kept it when he stood upon the tree; that is, to procure that temporal business be then under our feet, and not over our head.

2. We must receive our Lord, not with melancholy or anguish of mind, distracted with worldly thoughts, but as Zacchæus did, receive Him with joy, which springeth from a vehement affection towards this Holy Sacrament.

3. Consider, that it is not sufficient to receive Christ into our house, and then put the hand in the bosom: but we must furnish the Sacred Communion with good works, by relieving the necessities of our poor neighbours, after the example of Zacchæus: and he which doeth so, shall hear that

comfortable voice, " This day is salvation come intothy house."

As Zacchæus was willing to receive Jesus into his house, so let us be willing to receive Him into our hearts: as Christ said unto Zacchæus, " This day must I abide in thy house," so saith he unto every one of us, This day must thy Redeemer abide with thee.

### THE FRUIT.

The fruit of this meditation shall be, to desire and ask of Almighty God an affection to this Sacrament; from which affection springeth spiritual consolation, necessary for the receiving of the Holy Sacrament.

### THE SOLILOQUY.

O my bountiful Jesus, how liberal art Thou towards him who doth desire and seek Thee! Zacchæus was held with a desire but of seeing Thee only; and Thou not only didst show thyself of him to be seen, but also called him, and invited Thyself into his house; on whom to augment Thy favour, thou bestowed salvation. Oh, how well hath the Psalmist said of Thee, " All nations seeking Thee shall rejoice and be glad: and let them

say always which love Thy saving health, The Lord be praised."*

Zacchæus, thou worthily rejoicest, because thou hast Him in thy House, which maketh the Angels rejoice; only rejoice, and esteem it as nothing, if the Jews murmur, and call thee sinner, since He is at hand for thee Who can defend and justify thee; join thyself to Him, and He will be as a buckler for thee, and thou shalt also understand how sweet the Lord is. O my soul, thou hast also cause of rejoicing, and peradventure greater than Zacchæus had, seeing to thee also cometh the Fountain of all joy and gladness. Hear what the prophet Zechariah saith unto thee: "Rejoice, O daughter of Sion, and be glad, O daughter of Jerusalem; behold, thy righteous King and thy Saviour cometh unto thee!"† Nor cometh He to exact, or to command, any toilsome labour, but only for the cause of saving thee, and defending thee from the rebuke of thine enemies. Think not that a greater benefit is shewn unto Zacchæus than to thee: for while thou dost spiritually receive Him in bread and wine by faith, and after a most Heavenly manner, He sheweth that He is come unto thee not only to converse with thee a little and be gone, but to bestow salvation, as He did on the house of Zacchæus; to unite Himself to thee,

* Psalm ii. 19. † Zechariah ix. 9.

that thou mayest be one with Him, which is the end of this His coming unto thee.

Who doth not see, then, that this is a far greater benefit than Zacchæus's was? O my gracious Lord, seeing thou hast vouchsafed to enter this poor house of mine, give me grace that it may not happen to me as to the ungrateful Jews, who in the day of Palms received Thee with joy and triumph into Jerusalem, but a little after they cried to Pilate, "Crucify Him, crucify Him:" and casting Thy cross upon Thy shoulders, cast Thee forth out of their city. Let me die, O Lord, before; yea, let me die a thousand deaths, than that I cast Thee out of me; for that were to thrust Thee out of Thy own house, and myself out of Paradise.

## CHAPTER XXV.

A MEDITATION UPON THESE WORDS: HODIE OPORTET ME MANERE IN DOMO TUA: "TO-DAY I MUST ABIDE IN THY HOUSE."

WHO am I, O most bountiful Jesus, that Thou desirest to abide with me? Who am I, that may deserve to entertain Thee, the Lord of Heaven and earth? What dost thou find in me that doth so much delight Thee, and invite Thee to come under my roof? Art Thou ignorant of my most vile beginning? I am not of the number of that Celestial Hierarchy, I am not a Seraphim, not an Archangel, not an Angel, nor any of the thrones, nor other most sacred spirits; my being differs much from theirs; freed are they from all admixture of body, pure and innocent are they; I was born in sin, drawing my beginning from the earth, so mean a subject, I am not worthy, O my Saviour, of Thy Divine Presence; happily, Thy delight is to be with the sons of men. True; but I am not Abraham, I am not Moses, I am not as the Blessed Virgin: No, I bear not the least similitude to these blessed Saints in Heaven, while they remained in

the world. What shall I say? I am sorry, O my Lord, I am no more worthy to receive Thee than I am: but my comfort is, that as Thou tookest mercy on the woman of Canaan, and all distressed people that came unto Thee, so Thou wilt take mercy upon me, in that Thou sayest, To-day Thou must abide in my house; To-day, that is, now and for ever. *Domine, fiat voluntas tua;* "Lord, Thy will be done."

## CHAPTER XXVI.

A SHORT FORM OF CONFESSION, TO BE MADE IN PRIVATE BEFORE THE RECEIVING OF THE BLESSED SACRAMENT.

I MISERABLE sinner, confess and acknowledge with bended heart, and hands lifted up in the presence of Thee, O God, my many and manifold sins, and that I have transgressed sundry ways against the precepts of the first and second table. I am sorry from the bottom of my heart; and it grieveth me that I have so often offended Thee, my gracious God. I come unto Thee as a humble suitor, to obtain mercy and pardon for all my offences; I beseech Thee to sanctify me by Thy Holy Spirit, to strengthen my faith against all assaults of my ghostly enemy; to seal up in me by this Holy Mystery that comfortable hope of the life to come. Direct me, I beseech Thee, now approaching to Thy Holy Table, that I may abide with Thee, and be a fit habitation for Thy Holy Presence, both now and forevermore. When I consider Thou didst create me, not being asked;

redeem me, not being required ; it turneth my tears of sorrow into tears of joy, my tears of fear into tears of love. O my Saviour, shew mercy ; for by such great sinners as I am, Thou gettest greatest honour, as Thou didst by Mary Magdalen.

## CHAPTER XXVII.

AN ADMONITION, MOVING CHRISTIANS TO RECONCILE THEMSELVES, AND FORGIVE THEIR ENEMIES, BEFORE THEY COME TO BE PARTAKERS OF THE MOST HOLY SACRAMENT OF THE LORD'S SUPPER.

"WHEN thou bringest thy gift to the Altar," saith Christ our Saviour, "and there remeberest that thy brother hath aught against thee, leave thine offering before the Altar, and go thy way, and first be reconciled to thy brother, and then come and offer thy gift."* Also he saith unto His Disciples: "When you stand to pray, forgive, if you have aught against any man, that your Father which is in Heaven may forgive you your trespasses."† By both which sayings of the Son of God we learn that our oblations and prayers (otherwise in themselves amongst the best actions of a Christian life) are in no case acceptable unto God, without our reconcilement and charity first had with men. The Wise Man could think it unmeet in very reason to ask mercy, when we our-

* Matt. v. 23, 24. † Mark xi. 25.

selves deny mercy.* We may remember that the unthankful debtor that would not remit his fellow servant,† for his uncompassionate usage of his said fellow, found himself the like measure; that is, judgment without mercy, at his master's hand.

With what countenance, saith one, can we look up to Heaven, and say, "Lord, forgive us our trespasses, as we forgive them that trespass against us;" and yet revenge with all extremity the least offences offered unto ourselves? No, no, he that seeketh vengeance, shall surely find vengeance. *Mihi vindictam ego retribuam;* "Vengeance is mine," saith the Lord, "I will revenge." We must let God alone to right our wrongs, unless we will usurp that power which is only proper unto Him: for ourselves, we should not forget the Wise Man's counsel, "Forgive thy neighbour the hurt which he hath done thee; so shall thy sins also be forgiven thee when thou prayest." Should a man bear hatred against another, and desire forgiveness of the Lord? St. Peter saith unto Christ, "Master, how often shall my brother sin against me, and I forgive him? until seven times?" No, Peter, saith our Saviour, "I say not unto thee, until seven times, but until seventy times seven;"‡ that is, *quoties toties*, how often soever he sinneth against thee, so often shalt thou forgive him.

* Ecclus. xxviii. 2, 3. † Matt. xviii. 30. ‡ Matt. xviii. 21, 22.

The offering up of sacrifices in the old Law was a special part of that worship which the people were wont to perform unto Almighty God, as an acceptable service unto Him. But the prophet Isaiah tells them, all their offerings were utterly displeasing unto Him.* For why? they were all set on cruelty and revenge; their hands were full of blood; and therefore God would accept of no sacrifices at their hands. In our offerings, first the offerer is accepted, and then the offering. Our oblations that are done in love with God and man, those ascend like the smoke of Abel's sacrifice, and are well-pleasing unto the Most Highest.

But how should flesh and blood forgive, where wrong and injury hath been offered? That which Adam cannot bear, Christ can; that which to nature is so much against nature, and therefore difficult, is to grace nothing so; that which heathen men will so hardly brook, is to Christians who have, or should have, a further perfection, more facile and easy.

Therefore our Saviour tells His disciples of somewhat more than loving them who love first. *Ego dico vobis, diligite inimicos;* "I say unto you love your enemies, do good unto them that hurt you, pray for them that persecute you;" we forgive, we love our very enemies for His sake, who hath done far more for us. "What greater love,"

* Isaiah i. 11.

saith St. John, "than one to give his life for his friend?" Yet greater was Christ's love, who gave His life for us, that were His enemies. We have some reason to help the distressed, to relieve the poor and needy; for the very beholding of their necessity doth often move compassion; but to love our enemies we have no reason in the world, but only for His sake, who hath commanded all those who profess His name, and expect His kingdom, saying, *Diligite inimicos;* "Love your enemies." We forgive, and why? Christ hath forgiven us. We shew mercy, and why? Christ Jesus hath shewed mercy unto us. *Quid contra nos proximus*, saith an ancient Father; shall we see what our neighbour hath done against us; and shall we not see what Christ hath done for us? God forbid!

All that we can do or can forgive are pence only; Christ He forgives talents; we some few, He ten thousand; for number many, for weight heavy; we shew love, but Christ sheweth love indeed, love without example. Were we as ready to remember benefits, as we are injuries, we would be more charitable than we often are, writing our benefits in dust, and our injuries in marble.

But being ready to revenge, do we know how soon we may stand in need of God ourselves?—No, verily; and therefore we had need to shew compassion to others, lest we receive like for like.

When as now Jacob their father was dead, Joseph's brethren thought Joseph would revenge all the wrong they before unjustly offered him their brother; they were deceived, Joseph tells them he meant nothing less: "Am I," saith he, "in the place of God?"* as if he should have said, Myself am ready to ask forgiveness of God, and should I not from my heart forgive you my brethren? As if he should say, I do, I do. Wherefore one saith, *Qualem erga te Deum habere vis, talem te erga proximum ostendas:* "As thou wouldest have God be unto thee, so be thou to thy neighbour that hath offended thee." There were four things that might have moved the ungrateful servant to have forgiven the debt.† 1. That it was his fellow.—2. That the debt was small. 3. That he asked it in humble manner. 4. But chiefly that he himself had more forgiven him in the same cause.

To move Christians to this love Christ our Saviour goeth further, and saith, "Forgive, that you may be the children of your Father which is in Heaven; for He causeth the sun to rise on the just and on the unjust." It was a token that David was of the stock of Jesse when he would not only not hurt king Saul, his enemy, when he was alive, but would even shew mercy unto his offspring, when he was dead; "Is there any," saith he, "of the house of Saul, that I may do good unto them."

* Genesis l. 19. † Matt. xviii.

They give testimony that they are His followers who prayed for his enemies; Father forgive them who shew themselves ready to remit, and can find in their hearts to forgive offences offered; for it is not a disgrace or a base thing to remit injuries, as we imagine, but it is a princely thing; *Posse et nolle nocere, nobile:* "to be able, but not to hurt it is noble."

St. Ambrose told a great emperor of the world how Christians of his time did avenge themselves; "Our weapons," saith he, "are our prayers and tears; we weep for our persecutors, we pray for them, and after this manner do we fight against our enemies."

Neither shall our forgiving go away empty, for this active mercy shewed unto men shall be rewarded with passive mercy by Him, who hath said, "Blessed are the merciful, for they shall obtain mercy." Hence it cometh to pass that our enemies may do us as much good as the best friends we have in the world, whereas in forgiving them, we receive forgiveness of God; but for one drop of water given, we receive a gainful interest, a whole ocean sea; for our two mites, the whole treasure of the Temple. We give small benefits, and forgive some trespasses, but with God there is no depth of His bounty, no number of His mercies. If at any time we are justly moved, as we often are, to awaken our thankfulness, or to use that *quid*

*retribuimus* of the Prophet, "What shall we do unto the Lord for all the benefits he hath done unto us? We will take the cup of salvation, and call upon the name of the Lord."* Then, most especially, approaching unto this Holy Mystery, (for of the chiefest benefit, the chiefest remembrance is required,) which the old Christians in the primitive Church, well remembering, gave evident testimonies at this solemn occasion, by their devout prayers, and by their liberality to the poor, their visiting the sick, and other like works of mercy, which works of mercy, with Cornelius his alms, did go up to Heaven.†

It is wonderful to consider, and it may do a good man's heart good, to call to mind the uniform peace and peceable union those first Christians retained among themselves, all assembled in one communion of Saints, to worship Him on earth with whom they hoped shortly to rejoice in Heaven. They forgot not that charge left by Christ at His departure from the world: "By this shall men know that you are My disciples, that you love one another." Nor that loving entreaty of Abraham had with Lot: "Let there be no strife between thee and me, between thy herdsmen and my herdsmen, for we are brethren."‡ "Be of one mind," saith the Apostle, "live in peace, and the God of love and peace shall be with you."‖ And to the

* Ps. cxvi. 12, 13. † Acts x. 2. ‡ Gen. xiii. 8. ‖ 2. Corin. xiii. 11.

Ephesians he saith, "Let all bitterness, and anger, and wrath, be put away from you, with all malice; be courteous one to another, forgiving one another, even as God for Christ's sake forgave you."*—"There is but one Body, one Spirit, one Faith, one Baptism, one God which is above all, through all, and in us all."†

Last of all, in this Mystery, as the faithful find tranquillity of conscience wrought within, so also do they find the spreading of charity towards men abroad: which charity "thinketh no evil, believeth all things, hopeth all things, endureth all things."

When as Christ our Saviour was now to celebrate His last Supper, He Himself washeth His disciples' feet, wipeth them with a towel, giveth a precedent of humility and love, admitteth Judas, that bare an evil mind towards Him to His own dish, giveth Him a sop, speaketh mildly unto him, which all were tokens of love. Should we not take example by our Lord and Master! When may we more fitly use that Hymn of the Angels, respecting the common cause of joy we have, "Glory be to God on high, in earth peace, towards men good-will;" and not good-will in show, but even in singleness of heart. Wherefore to conclude with that of the Apostle St. Paul: "If there be any consolation in Christ, any comfort of love, any fellowship of the Spirit, be we of one accord.

* Ephesians iv. 31, 32. † Ibid. iv. 5, 6.

Let the same mind be in us that was in Christ Who humbled Himself, wherefore God hath highly exalted Him, and given Him a name above all names, that at the name of Jesus every knee should bow."*

* Philippians ii. 10.

## CHAPTER XXVIII.

### OF THE MANNER IN PARTICULAR HOW THE FAITHFUL COMMUNICANT IS TO EXAMINE HIMSELF.

THAT a Christian is to examine himself before he presume to eat of this Bread and drink of this Cup, was before shewn to be the counsel of the Apostle St. Paul, or rather of Him from whom St. Paul spake. Now of the manner in particular of this examining. The first thing to be considered is, that a Christian think it not grievous to search the secrets and corners of his soul, which David, though a king, and called away with many affairs, yet ceased not to do, as appeareth in Psalm vi.

Then let him go over the particulars of his whole life, as in what age, in what place, at what times, and in what company he hath lived; let him call to mind how he hath observed God's commandments, the works of mercy which he hath omitted, the seven capital sins, or any one of them, which he hath committed.

In this manner, first, how he hath offended in pride, whether he hath desired vain-glory for the goods of nature, as beauty, strength, youth; for the

goods of this world, as land, cattle, rich clothing, silver, gold; for the goods of grace, knowledge, eloquence, wisdom or other virtues. If he have despised or mocked others who have wanted any of these; if he hath feigned himself by hypocrisy more holy or virtuous than he hath been indeed; if he hath shewed himself by boasting to have magnified himself, that he hath gifts singular before others; if he hath been proud of his kindred, or friends, or favour, or office, or dignity; if he hath disdained his kindred because of their poverty; if he hath been disobedient to superiors; if he hath trusted in his own wit; if he hath loved singularity in speech, singularity in fasting, singularity in prayer, neglecting that which is ordained by the church; if he hath been curious in searching into high and intricate mysteries; if he hath been proud in justifying himself, and preferring his own deeds before the deeds of others.

Secondly, in wrath: let him call to mind whether he hath been moved or stirred up to anger against any man; if he have wished him any hurt in body, goods, or good name; if he have long time kept malice in his mind, often thinking how he might revenge; if he have vexed or troubled any man by suit, rather upon spleen than equity; if he have cursed or asked vengeance upon any, though it were his enemy; if he hath been impatient in time of trouble, sickness, or any other adversity.

Thirdly, in envy: if he hath been glad of other men's hurt, and sorry for other men's profits, as their good fame, or prosperity whatsoever; if he have in himself defamed any, either privily or openly, or given help or countenance thereunto; if he have made debate or discord between party and party, or hath let to make peace and unity to the utmost of his power.

Fourthly, in covetousness; let him bethink himself whether he hath taken other men's goods, by theft, or any other sinister or corrupt means, or had a will or purpose so to do; whether he hath withholden other men's goods wrongfully from them; whether he hath by fair promises fraudulently deceived any; whether he hath used any false wares, light weights, scant measures, or the like: whether he hath detained goods to his own use, which were intended to the use of others; whether he hath for advantage sake used falsehood in word or deed; whether he hath withdrawn his hand from charity, and refreshing poor people when he might have relieved them; last of all, whether he had been desirous of heaping up worldly goods, rather than of laying up treasure in Heaven.

Fifthly, in sloth: if he have been negligent or careless in God's service, especially upon the Sunday and Holy day, slothful to come to the Church, slothful to pray when he was there, slothful to hear the Word of God, slothful to apply

his mind unto good thoughts and Godly Meditations; if he have been careless to restrain his eyes from unlawful looks, or his feet from evil ways, or his mind from evil thoughts; if he hath spent his time in idleness, or left undone things he ought to have done.

Sixthly, in excess of eating and drinking: whether he hath lightly regarded times of fasting; whether he hath eaten or drunken at any time unto surfeiting, or by excess hath fallen into dissolute mirth and reckless behaviour; whether he hath had inordinate delight in eating and drinking, or desired meats and drinks more costly and delightsome than he ought.

Seventhly, in luxury: whether he hath kept in his mind evil and unclean desires, with delectation; whether he hath not fled the occasions of this sin as much as possibly he could, and ever more been careful to keep his body as the Temple of the Holy Ghost.

When he hath remembered diligently in the secret council house of his conscience all defects, then let him prostrate himself in penitent prayer, and say,

I accuse myself, that I have been negligent in putting away evil thoughts, for which I cry God mercy.

I accuse myself that I have spoken vain words, idle and unprofitable; for which I cry God mercy.

I accuse myself of my works, that I have not done them so purely for the love of God as I ought; for which I cry God mercy.

I accuse myself, that I have not kept my five senses, especially mine eyes, from all occasions of offending God, as I ought to have done; for which I cry God mercy.

I accuse myself of impatience in adversity, which I have not taken as from the hand of God, but have been often upon little occasions disquieted and troubled; for which I cry God mercy.

I accuse myself that I have not performed the works of mercy, either spiritual, as comforting the afflicted, counselling the ignorant, calling them home that go astray, reproving them that wilfully offend; or corporeal, as visiting the sick, feeding the hungry, relieving the distressed; for which I cry God mercy.

I accuse myself, for that I have been so unthankful to Almighty God for all His benefits bestowed upon me; for which I cry God mercy.

I purpose steadfastly to amend my former imperfections, and to continue Christ's faithful servant unto my life's end. Amen.

## CHAPTER XXIX.

### OF RESTITUTION TO BE MADE.

AMONGST rules needful to be observed in preparing ourselves duly, as we ought, before we come to the Table of the Lord, restitution is not the least. In restitution these circumstances are to be observed: first, by whom restitution is to be made; secondly, to whom; thirdly, of what; fourthly, of the time when; and last of all the reason why. For the first, he by whom restitution is to be made, is the person oppressing another by any unjust or unlawful means, in his body, in his goods, in his good name.

For the second, to whom restitution is to be made, is the person so and so oppressed, or the party injured. If access may not be had to the party injured, or if the party to whom restitution should be made be dead, or if his heirs be unknown, then let restitution be made by distribution to the poor and needy.

For the third, what is to be restored? Surely that which of right belonged unto another.

For the fourth, how much ought to be restored? If the quantity of the thing or loss be certain, then

let the same quantity be restored: if uncertain, as often it cometh to pass it is, then let so much be restored as a good conscience thinketh ought to be restored.

For the fifth, to wit, the place where restitution ought to be; surely, in the place where the loss was sustained.

For the sixth, restitution must have reference unto the time, that it be done forthwith, or at leastwise so soon as conveniently it may be; for the negative precept bindeth to make speed; thou shalt not hold that which is another's; so that there ought to be a readiness of mind to perform this, though the execution thereof be deferred for a season.

For the seventh, to wit, the reason why, is that axiom of St. Austin, *non dimittitur peccatum, nisi restituatur ablatum;* "the sin is not pardoned, unless the unjust gain be restored."

To conclude this point, together with the chapter, of making conscience, of making conscience, I say, (which Christians ought to do,) of making restitution before they come to the Table of the Lord, thereby unburdening their souls of a ponderous burden. If a remembrance of a great reckoning day to come, when the conscience shall be turned inside out, like Benjamin's sack; if a check of conscience for the time present, the crying sin of oppression, which will one day lie upon the

soul as heavy as lead, will not move men to restitution, yet at leastwise let common experience do it; have we not seen it, or at leastwise often heard it, that the third heir doth hardly rejoice in the enjoying of evil gotten goods? Have not these goods been like the coal taken from the Altar, which, as it is in the emblem, set the whole eagle's nest on fire? or as the gold Tolesse which they that possessed were seldom found to prosper. "A little," saith the Prophet David, "that the righteous hath, is better than great riches of the ungodly:"* where we see that a little is preferred before great riches. A little; but whose little? the little of the righteous, or of them who neither get riches by unjust means, or keep them if they have so gotten them: great riches, but whose? of the ungodly, those who, so themselves be rich, care not to make many poor.

* Psalm xxxvii. 16.

## CHAPTER XXX.

OTHER RULES CONCERNING A CHRISTIAN'S EXAMINING HIMSELF BEFORE HE COME TO THE HOLY COMMUNION.

EXAMINATION or probation of oneself, may be reduced to these four heads, whereof the first is faith; the second is repentance; the third, a heart occupied in no other affairs than Holy and Heavenly; the fourth, a resolution to newness of life.

Concerning faith, the Communicant ought principally to examine himself whether he steadfastly believe, that God, through Jesus Christ, is become propitious unto man, and that through Him he attaineth full redemption of his sins.

Concerning repentance, it is requisite that he examine himself whether he be sorry from the bottom of his heart for his sins, by true and unfeigned repentance; for true repentance makes him feel the burden, and feeling the burden, to go unto him that will ease all those that are weary and heavy

laden. Repentance makes him to find the disease, and finding the disease, to run unto the Physician, and receive this spiritual physic of the soul.

Concerning a heart occupied in Holy and Heavenly affairs, the Communicant ought to examine himself whether his heart be occupied in good thoughts. Now, what better thoughts may possess the mind of a faithful Communicant, presenting himself at the Table of the Lord, than these, or the like? O God, Thou art good! O soul, thou art happy!

Concerning a purpose or resolution of newness of life, the Communicant ought to examine himself whether he constantly purpose with himself that he will correct all his faults, and not commit them again for all the allurements that the world can afford. And although he hath a thousand times fallen into the same, yet so often also to purpose with himself amendment: provided ever that not by his own strength he may hope to perform this, but to place all in the aid and assistance of God, from whom every good and perfect gift descendeth,* and to whom we are evermore to pray with him. We believe, Lord; help our unbelief.

* James i. 17.

## CHAPTER XXXI.

### OF QUIETNESS OF MIND BEFORE THE RECEIVING OF THE HOLY COMMUNION.

GREAT defects there are in many, that coming unto the Holy Supper of the Lord, they come sometimes perplexed with various thoughts, sometimes distracted with a multitude of earthly business. These defects ought to be removed; for what more convenient at this time than to have a quiet mind, sequestered from all troublesome inferior cogitations? When thou enterest into the Church, saith St. Bernard, leave without all secular affairs; attend unto Him who attendeth unto thee: much more coming unto the Table of the Lord, leave all thy cares, and resign thyself wholly unto God.

It is said of Socrates, that his scholars bringing him presents, Sophocles, a poor boy of the company, comes unto him in this manner: "Sir, I have nothing to give you, only I give you myself." To whom Socrates answered, "Thou that givest thy-

self to me shalt receive thyself bettered by me." And so he did, after instruction in virtue and learning. If we have nothing to give, the very giving of ourselves to God is acceptable to Him, and profitable to us the givers.

There are that write of Thomas Aquinas, that learned Divine, how he was spoken unto in this manner, as it seemed from God: *Quid dabo tibi, Thoma?* "Thomas, what shall I give thee?" His reply was said to be, *Teipsum, Domine;* "Thyself, Lord."

What is the cause that we are often weak and weary? Surely for no other cause than for our distractions in human affairs. O happy were we, had we but a glimpse of that Heavenly Jerusalem, which St. John saw descending from Heaven.* Truly this should we see with St. John, if we were with him in the Spirit; but this cannot be, so long as we are in the flesh.

"When our grain," saith St. Austin, "doth putrify in lower places, we remove it into higher, where it is likely to be more safe, this should we do with our cogitations." St. Chrysostom unto the people of Antioch saith, "You would bestow your time, and employ your substance, where most gain is to be got;' why then, set your affections on Heavenly things. We see that those who sit upon round things do sit unstably; but those which set-

* Revelation xxi. 10.

tle themselves upon a corner stone sit sure. Christ is the corner stone upon whom we may safely rest: the world is unstable and wavering. Our Saviour doth manifest this to His Disciples, "In me, you shall have peace, but in the world you shall have affliction."* Where there is a contrary effect between these two, *vos in me*, and *vos in mundo:* you in Me, and you in the world; in Me peace and quiet; in the world trouble and affliction; who would take care about puddle water, that may drink freely of the Water of Life? They that desire nothing but Christ, shall in Christ find all things. Elkana said unto Anna, "Am not I better to thee than ten sons?"† Is not quiet in Christ better than all the pleasures and profits of the world? There is no taking aim at a flying fowl, nor settling our affections upon things which are transitory.

* John xvi. 33. † Samuel i. 8.

## CHAPTER XXXII.

### PIOUS CONSIDERATIONS BEFORE WE COME TO THE LORD'S SUPPER.

1. CONSIDER, Who, and how great a One, He is, Whom thou art about to receive.

2. If John the Baptist, sanctified in his mother's womb, thought himself unworthy to unloose the latchet of Christ's shoes; may not I say with humility and faith, how dare I receive Him; nay, touch Him?*

3. If the Apostle St. Peter said to Christ, "Go from me, for I am a sinful man:" how may I presume to join myself unto Him?

4. If Uzzah the priest was punished for touching the ark after an irreverent manner; what may I not fear, if I come not with reverence?

* "Take then this lesson, O thou that art desirous of this Table, of Emissenus, a Godly Father, that when thou goest up to the reverend Communion, to be satisfied with spiritual meats, thou look up with faith upon the Holy Body and Blood of thy God, thou marvel with reverence, thou touch it with the mind, thou receive it with the hand of thy heart, and thou take it fully with thy inward man."---[Homily of the worthy receiving of the Sacrament of the Body and Blood of Christ.

5. Joseph, saith Gregory, Bishop of Nyssa, ad Olympia, laid the Body of our Blessed Saviour in clean linen : this clean linen may resemble a clean conscience.

6. God saith to Moses,* sanctify the people before they come near the mount ; how much more ought we to be sanctified before that God cometh near us ?

* Exodus xix. 10.

## CHAPTER XXXIII.

### OF EXTERNAL REVERENCE, AND KNEELING AT THE TIME OF RECEIVING THE HOLY SACRAMENT.

ALTHOUGH for no other respect, yet in regard of the solemn performance of religious offices in the face of the Church, that rule of the Apostle ought to direct us, "Let all things be done decently and in order." For if reverence be to be used in actions of common life much more in actions tending to the service of God. What gesture doth better become us presenting ourselves at the Table of the Lord, under Whose Table we confess we are not worthy so much as to gather up the crumbs, than a gesture of reverence?

Our Lord and Saviour at the first institution of this Holy Sacrament, observed that which custom and long continuance made fit in celebrating the Passover. We, in celebrating the Lord's Supper, observe that which fitness and decency amongst the people of God, and long practice of the Church, hath made usual.

The service of God consisting both in the inward humbleness of the mind, and outward reverence of the body, doth manifest that duties ought to proceed from humility in both. As nature first maketh the heart, and after external parts in man; so, first, God requireth obedience of the mind, as in the first commandment; and next, reverence of the body, as we see in the second. Again, our bodies are the members of Christ, as the Apostle speaketh; and members ought to be obedient to their head.

To say that outward reverence is not expedient, is a branch of the heresy of the Manichees. To come unto the Holy Table of the Lord in any other behaviour than beseemeth humble suppliants, meekly kneeling upon our knees, being now to receive grace from the Giver of grace, were great indignity offered. To come into such a Presence, and to demean ourselves as if we were assembled to sit in commission with God, is sure far from Christian piety. If one come in that believeth not, seeing no reverence, what will he say? If he see reverence, then he saith, God is in them of a truth.*

David went uncovered before the ark; Michal mocked him. David's answer is, It is before the Lord, who hath exalted me.† Solomon in all his glory was upon his knees.‡ The four and twenty

* 1 Cor. xiv. 24. † 2 Sam. vi. 21. ‡ 1 Kings viii. 54.

elders, which signified the Church triumphant, fall down before Him that was, and is, and is to come.*

We owe to God a twofold devotion, internal and external; the one to be done, the other not to be left undone. The words of our Saviour to the woman to Samaria, "God is a Spirit; and the true worshippers are they that worship Him in spirit and in truth;" they do not take away external worship, as St. Ambrose and St. Cyril expound that place; but in spirit, that is, without the shadows of the Jews; in truth, without the error of the Gentiles. So, in spirit principally, but not in spirit only; for He that created both body and soul will have duties of both. It will be replied, that Pagans have kneeled to their idols; so it may be, that Pagans have worshipped the sun; shall we, therefore, cast away the use of the sun?

Sure, kneeling is a gesture well beseeming so Holy a Service. St. Paul blamed the Corinthians for their irreverent assembling at the Lord's Table, and tells them there was a difference between God's House and their own, between sacred and the common assemblies.†

Let them, therefore, take heed by the example of those Corinthians, amongst whom many were afflicted and punished unto death, as the Apostle in that place testifieth, for their want of reverence at the Table of the Lord. They that make no

* Rev. iv. 10. † 1 Corinthians xi. 22.

more of this Holy Service than of some familiar and ordinary repast, let them call to mind Who hath said it, "Every knee shall bow before me."*

It is often repeated, and to our greater shame neglected, "O come, let us worship, and fall down and kneel before the Lord."† We must learn of St. Paul to bow our knees unto the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ;‡ and not to be as the people of whom the Prophet complaineth,‖ whose neck was an iron sinew. We call it a service, and beseech God to accept it as a reasonable service; now servants before their masters will shew respect and reverence. We may consider the place where we are, which is the House of God; and Holiness becometh His house, saith the Prophet David. Jeremiah biddeth us lift up our hands and hearts to God in the Heavens.§ At the table of a mortal man we will use to take the lowest form; much more ought we to humble ourselves at this so high and so Heavenly a Presence.

St. Paul doth require the lifting up of pure hands in prayer; and St. James saith, "God resisteth the proud, and giveth grace to the humble:" then may the devout communicant use that of St. Bernard, *Domine, qui das gratiam humilibus, da gratiam ut sim humilis;* "Lord Thou that giveth grace to the humble, give me grace to be humble."

* Isaiah xiv. 23. † Psalm xcv. 6. ‡ Ephesians iii. 14.
‖ Isaiah xlviii. 4. § Lamentations iii. 41.

## CHAPTER XXXIV.

### A PRAYER TO GOD THE FATHER, TO BE SAID BEFORE THE HOLY COMMUNION.

*Used by Thomas Aquinas.*

O GOD, the Creator of all things, Father Omnipotent, Whose beginning receiveth no beginning, Whose everlastingness is without end, Whom all things confess their Maker; I, miserable and unworthy sinner, being now to approach to the honourable feast of the Body and Blood of Thy dear Son, our Lord Jesus Christ, carrying a troubled heart, a defiled body, a polluted tongue, and a wounded conscience, am much perplexed, and what to choose I know not; for if I come not, I fly from life; and if I come unworthily, I purchase damnation. O high Divinity, O dreadful Majesty, O loving mercy, whither shall I go? or whither shall I fly? or what (miserable creature that I am) shall I do? I have sinned against Heaven and before Thee, and am not worthy to ask Thee any thing as a son, but sorrowfully sighing, and striking my breast, and travailing, I speak:

Woe is me, wretched sinner; I have lost that which pertained to me of a son, but Thou hast kept the goodness of a most loving Father: pardon, therefore, O Father, O most gentle Father, pardon, pardon Thy prodigal son, returning, though at last; and stretching forth Thy hand of mercy from high, receive me, wretched sinner, in peace and favour; Who livest and reignest, God for ever and ever. Amen.

## CHAPTER XXXV.

### A PRAYER TO GOD THE SON, BEFORE THE HOLY COMMUNION.

O LORD Jesus Christ, who art the only Son of God, the most High King of kings, Lord of lords, the image of the Father, the brightness of eternal light, Whom the Angels do only desire to behold, Who after all Thy suffering, praying for Thine enemies, now sittest at the throne of glory; who am I, that doth presume not only to behold Thee my God, but also to take and receive Thy Body into the lodging of my body, and house of my soul, contaminated sinner? O miserable that I am, and most unhappy of all men, who do this so exceeding great injury to Thee, my God and Saviour. For when a thousand years of tears are not sufficient to receive, at the least but once worthily, this reverent and most precious Sacrament, so high and Divine a Mystery: "I, wretched and unworthy creature, daily offending, and adding sin unto sin, unprepared, and of a heart less contrite and purged, do notwithstanding take upon me often to receive it. But because Thy mercy is greater

by infinite than my misery, neither hath it been heard from the beginning of the world that Thou hast ever despised the prayers of the humble, who savest them that trust in Thee, and Who hast shed Thy precious blood for our salvation, and the salvation of the world; and for an everlasting pledge of Thy love towards us hast ordained this Sacrament. Trusting in this Thy unspeakable love, I most humbly prepare me to Thy Table, and of putting out from the house of my soul the sour leaven of hatred and evil will towards all, that I may keep this Holy Passover, with the sweet bread of sincerity and love.

Grant me Thy grace, that this Holy Mystery may turn and become effectual to the life and salvation both of body and soul, that I may firmly abide in Thee, who intend this day to receive Thee unto me.

Let my mind be confirmed amongst so great Mysteries with Thy comfortable Presence, that it may understand thou art present with her, and rejoice perfectly before Thee, the Fire which always burneth, the Brightness which always shineth: sweet Jesu, good Jesu, the Bread of life which refresheth us ever, and yet never decayest, which art always eaten, and remainest always whole, inflame and sanctify Thy vessel, purge it from malice, fill it with Thy grace, and being filled, pre-

serve it evermore in Thy Holy Love, Who livest and reignest one God, world without end. Amen.

### A PRAYER TO GOD THE HOLY GHOST.

O Holy Spirit, make my spirit conformable unto Thee; sanctify me, O Thou sanctifier of the hearts and reins, that I may be prepared to receive him holily, who is the Holy of Holies, to Thy glory; to whom, with the Father and the Son, be all glory world without end. Amen.

## CHAPTER XXXVI.

### OF THE DEVOUT MAN, TO WHOM CHRIST IN HIS LAST SUPPER SHEWETH FAVOUR.

IMAGINE, thou hadst been at Jerusalem when this Noble Sacrament was instituted by Christ; that thou hadst been invited by some of the Apostles to be present; consider with what joy thy soul had received this message, and how hastily all business laid aside, thou wouldest have run thither.

2. Imagine, that as soon as thou hadst come to the Supper, the Lord had washed thy feet, and said with tears falling on them, I do this to wash away many sins committed against thy Creator, by walking through ungodly ways, I wash thee for the labour which thou shalt suffer for Me in a spiritual life.

3. Imagine, that Christ said unto thee, Come unto the Table of Angels, eat My bread, drink wine, which I have mixed for thee; or, "Eat, O friends, drink, yea, drink abundantly, O beloved!"*

4. Lastly, imagine, how He bade thee sit down at the Table, casting his most longing eyes upon

* Cant. v. 1.

thee, saying, *Desiderio desideravi;* with a desire have I desired to eat this passover with you. Christ our Saviour desired to shew what thou also oughtest to desire; as if he should say, I have prevented thee with great benefits, and will hereafter enrich thee with greater, only continue in the love of Me. Consider what modesty thou wouldest have used at that Holy Table, with what attention thou wouldest have received the words of Jesus. "The remembrance of Josiah," saith the Wise Man, "is like a perfume;"* much more pleasant is the remembrance of our Lord Jesus, His last institution unto us.

### THE FRUIT OF THIS MEDITATION.

The fruit is, to give the Lord hearty thanks for this inestimable benefit, now to be received; to beseech Him that He would not suffer thee to die ungrateful; to call to mind that Christ kept the best wine until the last, left this Holy Repast as a sweet remembrance of His love at parting; that this love of His was a motion natural, which motion (say the philosophers) is most forcible towards the end.

### THE SOLILOQUY.

O my soul, how lovingly doth the Lord knock

* Eccl. xlix. 1.

at thy door with a desire of entering in, and resting with thee: arise, O my soul, and Christ shall give thee light; not only the shepherds of Bethlehem had cause of joy, who found as it was told them, but thou hast cause of joy too, who shalt find the joy of Israel. No marvel though Martha and Mary went forth to meet the Lord, knowing how he would fill their minds with celestial consolation. Go forth, O my soul, to meet Him that cometh unto thee, who is the stay, yea, the whole stay of all thy being. The water that is separated from the fountain, vanisheth; the bough that is cut from the tree, withereth; the body from which the soul is gone, dyeth; depart not, therefore, O my soul, from the soul of thy soul, but embrace him with all gladness. Lord, as there is no doubt but that such was the excess of Thy love and favour, whereat even the Angels were amazed, so is it sure that I was most bound, not only to run the way of all Thy commandments, but also to spend my life for the love of Thee. Thou hast bestowed on me this so excellent a gift, more noble than human understanding is able to conceive, from whence springeth an obligation which doth bind me unto Thee. Who doth not see that I shall be most unthankful, if I acknowledge not Thy singular love? O my heart, open thyself, and shew with what bond of reloving, Jesus loving thee, thou art bound.

## CHAPTER XXXVII.

WHEN YOU ARE ABOUT TO COMMUNICATE, AND ART NOW RECEIVING THE MOST HOLY EUCHARIST, MEDITATE UPON THESE SAYINGS OF HOLY SCRIPTURE.

1. *Ecce sponsus venit;* "Behold, the Bridegroom cometh, go forth to meet Him."*

2. *Ecce ancilla Domini;* "Behold the handmaid of the Lord; be it unto me according to Thy word."†

3. *Dic verbum, et vivet anima;* "I am not worthy, &c. do but say the word, and my soul shall live."‡

4. "Lift up your heads, O ye gates, and be ye lift up ye everlasting doors, and the King of Glory shall come in."‖

5. "Taste and see how gracious the Lord is, blessed is the man that putteth his trust in Him:"§ saying, *Hoc facite in meam commemorationem;* "Do this in remembrance of me."¶

O good Jesu join me inwardly unto Thee, to the glory of Thy name, and the salvation of my soul.

* Matt. xxv. 6. † Luke i. 38. ‡ Matt. viii. 8.
‖ Psalm xxiv. 7. § Psalm xxxiv. 8. ¶ 1 Cor. xi. 24.

Also, in the time of communicating, say, Turn unto thy rest, O my soul. Again, Lord, say unto my soul, I am Thy salvation. And again, O knit my heart unto Thee, and I will fear Thy name. And last of all say, O most loving and sweet Jesus, the love and sweetness of my heart, the life of my soul, my mellifluous food, have mercy upon me, be with me, O Lord, now and for ever. Amen.

*Or thus,*

Good Jesu, the sweetness of my heart, the life of my soul, my eternal God, bountiful Jesus, join me nearly unto Thee, to the praise and glory of Thy name, and to the salvation of my soul. Amen.

*Immediately after your receiving, say the* 103*d Psalm.*

1. "Praise the Lord, O my soul, and all that is within me praise His Holy name.
2. "Praise the Lord, O my soul, and forget not all His benefits.
3. "Who forgiveth all thy sins, and healeth all thy infirmities.
4. "Who saveth thy life from destruction and crowneth thee with mercy and loving kindness.
5. "Who satisfieth thy mouth with good things, making thee young and lusty as an eagle."

*Or that hymn of Simeon,*

"Lord, now lettest thou Thy servant depart in peace, for mine eyes have seen Thy salvation."*

*So soon as you have communicated, say also,*

Thy Blood, O Lord Jesus Christ, which was shed for us, let it be to the remission of all our sins, of all our negligences and ignorances; let it be to the strengthening, increase, and conservation of faith, hope, and charity, of graces, of virtues, of carefulness, of pleasing Thee, O Lord, in this life, and of attaining glory in the life to come.

* Luke ii. 29.

## CHAPTER XXXVIII.

OF THE GREAT ESTEEM AND DEVOTION GIVEN BY THE ANCIENT FATHERS TO THIS MOST HOLY SACRAMENT.

WITH what chastity of body and purity of mind ought I to receive that Mystery, where Thou, O Lord, art the Feeder and the Food; the Giver and the Gift? *Ambrosius in orationis ante Sacr. Cœn.*

St. Jerome, a little before his departure, being about to receive, humbly kneeling, did communicate with many tears. *Eusebius in vita S. Hieronymi.*

It is writen of Constantine, no less godly than mighty an emperor, that with great reverence and devotion, before any attempt against his enemies, his wont was to receive the Holy Eucharist. *Eusebius in vita Constantini.*

By the force of this Sacrament the force of the devil is abated. *Ignatius ad Ephes.*

St. Cyprian calleth this Blessed Sacrament, a joyful Solemnity. *Cypr. de Cœn. Dom.*

Of the old Christians, their solemn assembly to receive the Eucharist was called ἀλάπη, an Assembly or Feast of love.

## CHAPTER XXXIX.

### A FORM OF THANKSGIVING, AFTER THE RECEIVING OF THE MOST HOLY COMMUNION.

I GIVE Thee Thanks, O most loving Jesus, who hast vouchsafed to admit me a sinful creature, to the magnificent and quickening Feast of Thy Sacred Table.

Thou wouldest that I should be as the Ark of the Covenant, where Thou Thyself vouchsafest to abide. Thou wouldest that in this Ark, manna should be kept, wherewith Thou didst feed Thy people, until they entered into the land of promise. Cause, I beseech Thee, that this manna now received, whereof that was but a figure, may be preserved in my soul, that I may feel the effectual fruit of Thy Passion, for the remission of my sins, the merit of righteousness, purchased by Thy Passion, and the reward of everlasting glory.

Cause also that like as in the Ark the Tables of the Law were kept, so a desire of fulfilling Thy will may be contained in my soul. Grant that I may honour, love, and obey Thee, that I be sepa-

rated from this love by no allurements whatsoever of my ghostly enemy. Tarry with me, O Blessed Jesus, until the evening of my age, and when the night of death approacheth, I will not let Thee go till Thou hast blessed me, and yielded to this petition of my sobbing soul. O Lord, fulfil her desire, never depart from her.

What blessings shall I give unto Thee, O my dear Saviour? Where shall I begin to express my love and duty towards Thee, Who hast said, "Behold I am with you even unto the end?" My soul desireth to be satisfied in the beholding of Thy countenance, even as the heart longeth for the fountains of water. Turn thee, O my soul, unto thy rest, for the Lord hath done well for thee; He hath shewed thee marvellous great kindness in the land of the living. For this cause also is my heart glad, and my glory rejoiceth, and my flesh shall rest in hope: bless thou the Lord, O my soul.

## CHAPTER XL.

### ANOTHER FORM OF THANKSGIVING.

OMNIPOTENT and most Loving Father, I cannot give Thee thanks worthily or enough, according to the desire of my mind, for the treasure of this Heavenly food, which Thou hast now given me in this Heavenly Mystery, the true Bread of Heaven, that everlasting meat that abideth for ever, Thy blessed Son our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ, in Whom I have obtained, by the gift of this Holy Communion, an assured pledge of an inheritance to come. Grant, O Lord, that I may daily profit in virtue and godliness, that this sacred union with Christ my Redeemer may be of such force in me, that rejecting all evil ways, I may go forward in piety towards God, chastity towards myself, and charity towards my neighbour, to Thy good pleasure, through the same our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ. Amen.

### THE SOLILOQUY.

Awake, my soul, and behold the new favour

wherewith thy loving Jesus doth prosecute thee. Thou hast good cause to rejoice that the Lord of Majesty vouchsafes to come unto thee to comfort thee. Vouchsafe only a good-will for all His bounty towards thee. Be not as the nine unthankful lepers who forgat their curing. Cast all thy care upon Him who careth for thee; cease not to magnify Him, O my soul, for He that is mighty hath magnified thee, and done great things for thee.

Thou knowest how the Son of God hath loved thee, when, departing out of the world unto the Father, He left thee so comfortable a remembrance and seal of all His mercies. O love without measure! Return, O my soul, give glory unto God, for the Lord hath blessed thee. Return unto thy gracious Saviour, of Whom thou mayest say, Here will I rest, here will I dwell for ever.

Can it be, O Lord, that Thou wouldest follow man with such love, as to unite Thyself unto him? Rejoice, O ye sons of Adam, for no longer shall that saying of the Prophet be applied to you, "My tears have been my meat day and night, whilst they yet daily said, Where is now thy God?"—Tears are now no longer your meat, but the gladsome food of Angels. Your God is with you even unto the end. The poor do eat and are satisfied. O Lord, grant me the grace of devotion and thankfulness, that I may ask instantly, expect patiently,

receive it gratefully, preserve it humbly, and use it diligently, to the glory and honour of Thy Holy and Blessed name. Amen.

I desire to offer myself, my soul and body, a sacrifice unto Thee; nay, I offer up all my sins, both original and actual, upon the acceptable altar of Thy mercy; consume them with the sacred fire of Thy love, and let this offering, as Abel's offering, be well pleasing in Thy sight. But to return unto this Heavenly food now received: Ah, hard and perverse heart of mine, how canst thou continue earthly, when thou art fed with the bread of Heaven? When at length wilt thou become Heavenly? How is it that thou dost remain sensual, and alienated from the Spirit, who art spiritually preserved? Is it because thou dost consist of earth? O Jesu, remember here what thou hast elsewhere said, I come to send a fire, and what is my desire, but that it may be kindled?* Let it be kindled in me, that I may be carried upwards, and seek the things which are above, where Thou sittest at the right hand of God: that though my body converse here on earth, my affections may be in Heaven, that from henceforth not so much I do live, as Thy grace may be said to live in me.

* Luke xii. 49.

## CHAPTER XLI.

THE ELEVENTH GENERAL MEDITATION, TO BE USED AFTER THE RECEIVING OF THE BLESSED SACRAMENT.

CONSIDER, with what labours and tears Adam, after He was cast out of Paradise, did eat the bread of carefulness all the days of his life. But now man, received into the state of grace, is come to feed on the Bread of Life itself.

2. Consider, that Solomon* would not let his wife, the daughter of Pharaoh, an idolater dwell in his house, because the ark of God had been there. So we ought not to let sin reign in us after the receiving of the Holy Eucharist, because the Ark of His Covenant also hath been received of us.

3. Consider, that as the Israelites when they had eaten the Paschal Lamb, and were delivered from Pharaoh's bondage, made no stay in Egypt, but set forward forthwith towards the land of promise; so after this our Passover, wherein a mighty deliverance from the hands of our spiritual Pharaoh is obtained, we are to depart from the works of dark-

* 1 Kings vii. 8.

ness to go forward without delay, from grace to grace, from virtue to virtue, until we come to our Heavenly Canaan.

4. Consider, how the wise men, when they had seen Christ at Bethlehem, and there done their homage,* they returned not by ambitious and cruel Herod, nor by the troublesome Jerusalem, but *per aliam viam*, another way. So we, having visited Christ at our Bethlehem, which signifieth the house of bread, and there offered our souls and bodies a sacrifice unto Him, should return towards our own country, which is above, not by the ambitious and troublesome desires of the world, but pass along peaceably a better way, that we may at last come unto our Heavenly, that is, our proper country, there to abide for ever.

5. Consider, how just Noah was a hundred years together labouring to frame and build an ark to save him from the flood: and should not we endeavour for the time to come, to spend it wholly in framing a good conscience before God and man, which shall one day save us from a flood of miseries?

6. Consider, that a publican† who before did exact by extremity from others, but having received Christ into his house, became beneficial unto others, and readily made restitution for all the wrong he had offered beforetime.

* Matthew ii. 12. † Luke xix. 8.

7. Consider the admonition and absolution that Christ gave unto him that was cured by the pool's side, "Behold thou art made whole, sin no more."*

8. Consider how Saul, after he was preserved by God, became another man.

9. Consider, how God doth complain by His prophets, against the ingratitude of his people, and how he accepteth those who are thankful unto Him; "I have nourished children, and they have rebelled against me."† Christ said unto the Samaritan, "Arise, go thy way, thy faith hath made thee whole."‡

10. Consider, that to make an apostacy from the calling to grace, were great indignity offered unto God, and hurt to ourselves.

11. Consider, how from henceforth we ought to keep a watch over all our senses, without which the soul is a city without walls exposed to the invasion of enemies, or as a vessel without a cover, which in the old law was impure.

12. Remember how the children of Israel, to avoid the punishment of the firstborn of the Egyptians, sprinkled their door-posts with the blood of the Lamb: in like manner, to avoid the death of sin, let us sprinkle the posts of our hearts with the continual remembrance of Christ's Passion. I bear in my body the dying of Jesus, saith St. Paul.

13. Remember that "I have put off my coat,

* John v. 14. † Isaiah i. 2. ‡ Luke xvii. 19.

how shall I put it on? I have washed my feet, how shall I defile them?"*

### THE FRUIT OF THIS MEDITATION

Is, first to acknowledge with all thankfulness, God's goodness towards us; secondly, to apply ourselves wholly for the time to come to serve Him in Holiness and Righteousness, that we may daily endeavour to appear before the God of gods in Zion.†

### THE SOLILOQUY.

Remember, O my soul, that thou hast been fed with the food of Angels, and therefore shouldest not now turn to feed on the husks of swine, that is sensual affections. Thou knowest that wise king Solomon,‡ would not that his own wife, who was Pharaoh's daughter, should dwell in the house where the Ark of God was; for he counted it wickedness, that a woman descending from the Gentiles, enemies unto God and his people, should inhabit so Holy a place. How great wickedness, then, should it be to receive sin, where God Himself, the Lord of the Ark, is conversant. In the Ark were contained the Tables of the Law; in my heart let there be ever a desire of fulfilling Thy will. When the God of all Power and Majesty hath made thee his handmaid, is it not a sign of

* Cant. v 3. † Psalm lxxxiv. 7. ‡ 1 Kings vii. 8.

singular love and favour? Oughtest thou not to render him again all service and duty? The Patriarch Jacob was content to serve seven years, and after that seven more, and all for Rachel; which time, notwithstanding, seemed short unto Jacob himself, for the love he bare to Rachel. Much shorter should the time seem to thee, wherein thou servest this Lord: all labours may be accounted light for His love, who is more to be beloved than any earthly creature, by infinite degrees. Thou shouldest be happy, O my soul, if thou knewest what dignity it is to serve so high a Lord. Call to mind how thou hast served in times past this vain world, whereby thou hast been subject to many perturbations. How many bitter crosses hast thou sustained in this service? Now by the help of thy Heavenly Lord, Whom thou hast this day received, thou art able to tread under foot all the allurements of thy ghostly enemies, and become mistress of thine own passions. Remember that Holiness becometh the house of God, whose house thou now art. Consider, that to serve God is to bear rule. Think thou art no longer thine own, but God's, to whom thou hast consecrated thyself. His will, not thine, ought ever to be fulfilled, that in all things thou yield humble obedience, and reply with the Apostle, *Quid vis me facere?* "Lord, what wilt Thou that I do?"*

* Acts ix. 6.

## CHAPTER XLII.

CAUTIONS TO BE OBSERVED OF THE DEVOUT CHRISTIAN AFTER HIS RECEIVING THE HOLY SACRAMENT.

THAT he be no less careful now, after this Heavenly repast, in the exercises of devotion, than he was before in preparing himself.

2. That he use much silence, and some solitariness, the same day, that he may be private thereunto, *Deo et sibi*, " to God and himself."

3. That he retire himself from worldly affairs.

4. That he often determine of his future conversation to be religious and fearing God.

5. That he resolve with the prophet, *Dixi custodiam vias meas ;* " I said I will take heed unto my ways."*

6. That he resign himself wholly to God's pleasure.

7. That he use all the means which be helpful in this resigning himself wholly unto God's pleasure ; of these means some are general, and some are particular.

* Psalm xxxix. 1.

1. Amongst the general, the first is a steadfast purpose not to offend God in this or that sin from henceforth, whereunto he hath been formerly subject.

2. It doth much help to fly occasions which are wont to draw men to sin, as the place of ill company; for it is written, "Death entereth in by the windows."*

3. It doth much help to resist temptations in the beginning, to extinguish the first spark of evil desire, before it inflame the heart; which is done if we fly to prayer and meditation of Christ's passion.

4. It also much helpeth to keep the purpose of not offending God, to hear the word of God, to read good books; by this means the heart of man is recollected.

5. It availeth not a little to be ever conversant in the sight of God; to have this inscription in the house or place of our most frequent abode, *Noli peccare, quia Deus videt;* sin not because God sees thee.

6. A good mean of Holy life, is to fly idleness, the nourishment of vice.

7. O, consider that having now cast out Jonah, that is, some sin of disobedience to God, we should be careful for the time to come. Why did the holy man Job make a covenant with his eyes, but

* Jeremiah ix. 21.

that he knew that sight did cause cogitation, cogitation delight, delight consent, and consent will bring forth sin?

8. Last of all, an effectual mean against all vice, is the often receiving the Holy Sacrament, which is wont for to strengthen the soul against temptations.

## CHAPTER XLIII.

CONSIDERATIONS CONCERNING NEWNESS OF LIFE: TO BE USED AFTER THE RECEIVING OF THE HOLY COMMUNION.

FIRST. Let the faithful Christian call to mind, that as often as he receiveth the Holy Sacrament of the Lord's Supper, so often he cleanseth himself in the Blood of Christ, which is thereunto very powerful. Now having been cleansed and washed, let him say with the wise man, *Lavi pedes meos, quomodo inquinabo eos?* I have washed my feet, how shall I defile them?*

Let him call to mind that it is to small purpose with the sick man to go to the physician, and by and by either to run into a relapse, or not to observe remedies given him for his health.

Now of the remedies or spiritual antidotes against sin, some are general and some are particular. Amongst the general, the first is, to be as it were always conversant in the sight of God, who is the witness of all our actions. I mean, to be ever conversant in the sight of God, is to call

* Canticles v. 3.

to mind that of the wise man, *In omni loco oculi Domini contemplantur bonos et malos ;* in every place the eyes of the Lord do behold the good and the evil. That of the prophet David, *Providebam Dominum in conspectu meo semper ;* I always had the Lord in my sight. That of Tobias to his son, *Omnibus diebus vitæ tuæ in mente habeto Deum ;* have God in thy mind all the days of thy life.— Let this also be written in thy mind, virtue shall see God.

In the old law Almighty God commanded the Israelites to wear fringes upon the borders of their garments,* that when they did look upon them, they should remember God's commandments, and do them. Surely, in like manner, it shall be much pleasing to God, if with any sign we are stirred up to remember the presence of God.

The second is, to meditate at all hours, of the hour of our departure out of this life, according to that of the wise man, *Memoraro novissima tua, et in eternum non peccabis ;* remember thy latter end, and thou shalt never do amiss.

The third is, to beseech Christ not to go from us, as the disciples did, "because the night of death draweth nigh."†

The fourth is, humble, devout, and continual prayer, according to that of our Saviour, *Orate, ne intretis in tentationem ;* pray, that ye enter not

* Numbers xv. 38. † Luke xxiv. 29.

into temptation; and sure, none falleth into temptation but first falleth from prayer. Wherefore, that of St. Paul, to the Thessalonians, is always to be remembered and practised, *Orate semper;* pray continually.*

The fifth is, to fly all allurements to evil, wanton talk, wandering cogitations.

The sixth is, often to hear the word of God, which doth collect the heart of man, allay passions, and replenish the will with good desires; the reading of religious books, and often meditating of the benefits of God. Joseph saith, how can I sin against my Master, seeing He hath put all that he hath into my hands?†

The seventh is, in the beginning diligently to resist temptation, to nip vice in the bud, to kill the serpent in the egg, and to dash the little ones or small sins against the stones. If a man's enemy stood at the door pressing to enter in, and hurt him, who would not keep him out; who so careless of his safety as to receive in such a one?

The eighth is, often to call to mind the happiness of good men, the calamity of the evil, and the vanity of the world: *qui bene vivit*, saith Origen, *est verus homo, immo est quasi angelus;* He that lives well is a true man; yea, rather an Angel.‡

The ninth and last is, a daily and devout medi-

* 1 Thess. v. 17. † Genesis xxxix. 8. ‡ Hom. xiv. in Levit.

tation of the Passion of Christ our Lord, calling to mind that of the Apostle St. Paul, that obstinate sinners crucify again the Son of God.*

From the remedies of sin in general, let us come, in the next place, to the remedies of several vices or sins in particular.

* Hebrews xi. 6.

## CHAPTER XLIV.

### REMEDIES AGAINST PRIDE AND VAIN GLORY.

TO repress pride and vain glory, it shall help a man.

1. That he daily meditate how vile he himself is in body and mind.

2. That he is raised from low estate by the favour of God.

3. That what good soever he hath, he hath it from God.

4. That pride makes a man contemptible to men and hateful to God?

5. That God resisteth the proud, as appeareth by Lucifer, Rehoboam, Nebuchadnezzar, Antiochus, Sennacherib and others. And *ruina præcedentium*, it is *admonitio sebsequentium*; the fall of them that go before, it should be the admonition of them that follow after.

6. That it depriveth them of spiritual goods, especially of grace, whereof being deprived, they fall into an ocean sea of evils.

7. That Christ our Saviour hath said, *Discite ex me, quia humilis sum;* Learn of me, for I am humble.

## CHAPTER XLV.

### REMEDIES AGAINST COVETOUSNESS.

LET every one consider, that the mind of man is no more satisfied with much than it is with little; and, therefore, the desire of having brings the mind to a perpetual agitation.

1. That covetousness is the root of all evil;* from hence come wars, hatred, enmity, seditions, and innumerable evils, which turn away the mind from spiritual things, and from God.

3. That he consider the shortness of his life, and that no man's life consisteth in the abundance of his riches, as our Saviour admonisheth.†

4. That he trust in God, who feedeth the sparrows and young ravens.

5. That he is a steward, and not a lord, of temporal riches.

6. That he set before his eyes the example of Christ, and all Holy men, who despised earthly riches to be rich in God.

* 1 Tim. vi. 10, † Luke xii. 15.

7. That he remember it was spoken by our Saviour, "It is a blessed thing to give rather than to receive.*

8. That the best riches are treasures in Heaven.†

* Acts xx. 35. † Matt. vi. 20.

## CHAPTER XLVI.

### REMEDIES AGAINST LUXURIOUSNESS OF LIFE.

THAT from hence come diseases of body, and griefs of mind.

2. That idleness is the cause of this evil.

3. To depart from the company of those that are wont to excite unto this evil.

4. To be careful that we give not our enemy strength, but, by abstinence, rather (as the abstaining from strong wines and hot meats) to repress him.

5. To repel evil thoughts.

6. To use much fasting and prayer; for this kind of spirit is cast out by fasting and prayer.

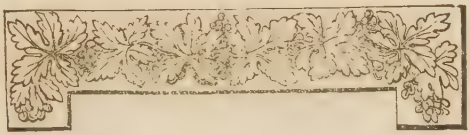
7. To meditate how vain this sinful pleasure is, how vile, and what is the foulness of this sin.

8. How it hath been punished by the overthrow of Sodom and Gomorrah.

9. That chastity is rewardable with God and man; with God, in that it is said, "Blessed are the pure in heart, for they shall see God;"* with man, "Whoso loveth pureness of heart, the king shall be his friend."†

* Matt. v 8.

† Prov. xxii. 11.



## CHAPTER XLVII.

### REMEDIES AGAINST ANGER.

TO call to mind that of the wise man, "A soft answer appeaseth wrath."*

2. To consider how unbefitting a thing for man wrath is, which makes him fierce as a beast, and furious as a mad man.

3. Let him consider the effects of wrath, which are for the most part, contumelies, outcries, indignation, blasphemies, and swelling of the mind.

4. Let him consider the punishment of this vice, *qui irascitur fratri*, "Whosoever is angry with his brother unadvisedly, shall be culpable of judgment."†

5. Let him call to mind how many injuries Christ suffered for us, from whom all His adversaries could not wrest one angry word; "And Christ suffered for us," saith St. Peter, "leaving us an example; who, when He was reviled, reviled not again."‡

* Prov. xv. 1. † Matt. v. 22 ‡ 1 Peter ii. 23.

## CHAPTER XLVIII.

### REMEDIES AGAINST ENVY.

CONSIDER how unprofitable envy is, which only vexeth him that is envious.

2. That God is the revenger of wrongs, and that vengeance is His.

3. That we are commanded to overcome evil with good; that if our enemy thirst, we give him drink; for in so doing we heap coals of fire upon his head, that is, give him incitements of charity and provokements of loving again.

4. That envy is against the law of nature; for one member will be helpful to another, as if the foot be sore the head will look down unto it, the hand will stroke it: now we are all members one of another, as the Apostle teacheth us.*

5. To call to mind that of our Saviour, "Forgive, and ye shall be forgiven."†

* Romans xii. 5.

† Luke vi. 37.

## CHAPTER XLIX.

### REMEDIES AGAINST GLUTTONY.

TO consider how soon the delight of meat and drink passeth away.

2. How much it displeaseth God, "Behold this was the iniquity of Sodom, pride, fulness of bread,"* &c.

3. That fasting goeth evermore with prayer and devotion.

4. That pleasure in meats and drinks, is the pleasure rather of beasts than men.

5. That nature is content with little.

* Ezekiel xvi. 49.

## CHAPTER L.

### REMEDIES AGAINST SLOTH.

TO call to mind that God hath made nothing to be idle, and that every thing in nature doth finish his course by a kind of motion.

2. That slothfulness doth depress the mind, and causeth a loathing of honest labour.

3. That it is no other but the sepulchre of a living man, for they which do nothing may be said to be dead, or have no being amongst men.

4. That as God made the bird to fly, so man to labour.

5. That labour doth prevent evil, as the vessel that is full can receive no other liquor.

6. To consider that David, not when he was persecuted of Saul, or when he was in the war, fell into sin, but when he was at home, doing nothing. That Solomon, not when he was building the Temple, but when he was at ease and quiet, offended God.

7. That Adam, in the state of innocency, was appointed to labour.

8. That though some came sooner, some later, into the vineyard,* yet all laboured that had the penny at the end of the day.

9. That our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ having cured the man that lay diseased of a long infirmity, gave him this admonition after his curing, "Behold thou art made whole, sin no more, lest a worse thing come unto thee."†

* Matt. xx. 9. † John v. 14.

## CHAPTER LI.

### THE CHIEFEST FIGURES OF THE MOST HOLY SACRAMENT.

THE first figure of this Divine Sacrament is mentioned in Genesis ;* When Abraham obtained a noble victory against those kings there spoken of, Abraham returning from the victory, saith the scripture, Melchisedeck, the king of Salem, for that he was a priest of the most high God, offered bread and wine, and blessed Abraham. But that Melchisedeck was a figure of Christ, St. Paul to the Hebrews proveth,† and that the bread and wine offered of Him was a figure of the Body and Blood of Christ, which He being a King and Priest after the order of Melchisedeck,‡ offered unto the most high God, and afterward left unto us His Body and Blood spiritually, under the signs of bread and wine, as the Holy Fathers with one consent do teach. But of this figure learn, as in the most Holy Sacrament, we faithfully receive Christ, and obtain a blessing of Him, so it is necessary, that

* Gen. xiv. 18. † Heb. vii. 1. ‡ Psalm cx. 4.

first we prepare to fight against the unruly motions of our mind, and put away our sins by the works of contrition and confession, as that valiant Abraham cast out the kings, his enemies.

2. A figure of this most Holy Sacrament was the Shew-bread which was kept on the Table of proposition, in the sight of God.* None were to eat of this Bread, but those that were clean and sanctified, and therefore it was called the Holy and Sanctified Bread,† by which is signified that if we be fed with the Sacred Bread of the law of grace prefigured by that Bread, it is necessary that we be chaste, and that we have a good conscience.

3. A figure of this Divine Sacrament was the cake baked under the ashes, which the angel brought to Elias, by virtue whereof he being strengthened, as the Holy Scripture doth testify,‡ walked forty days and forty nights even to the mount of God, Horeb, where afterwards he saw the Lord. This figure doth signify the power and efficacy which the Holy Communion doth yield us, to finish the troublesome peregrinations of this life, even until we come to the Heavenly hill, where we shall see God with inexplicable pleasure.

Now, as common bread doth first of all preserve the life temporal; secondly, doth augment and strengthen it; thirdly, although often eaten, yet it

* Exodus xxv. 30. Leviticus xxiv. 6.

† 1 Samuel xxi. 6. Matthew xii. 4. ‡ 1 Kings xix. 8.

doth not breed loathsomeness; yea, rather it is an evil sign, when bread doth not refresh, to any one; fourthly, a feast without bread, although it abound with most costly dishes, is imperfect. So this Sacramental Bread first of all, it doth preserve a spiritual life; secondly, by confirming grace, which is the life of the soul, it augmenteth the same, and maketh it strong against the assaults of the devil; thirdly, to men spiritually minded it never bringeth loathsomeness, though it pleaseth not the palate of the sick, which cometh to pass, *ex organo male disposito*, of the palate that is ill-disposed.

The natural man, saith St. Paul, perceiveth not the things which are of God;* fourthly, let the Christian man have all the goods of this mortal life, if that be wanting in Him which is contained in the Holy Sacrament, he hath nothing: yea rather, he may truly be called miserable; fifthly and lastly, the bread before it cometh to perfection, it suffereth many things: for the grain of corn which is the matter thereof, is first sown, and covered in the earth, then it is cut down, afterwards it is bound as a malefactor, imprisoned in the barn, threshed out, winnowed, ground in the mill, bolted, and scorched with fire, so that it may very well agree with this Sacrament, wherein the elements are not whole, but broken and poured out, wherein also the Passion of Christ our Lord, and His suffering

* 1 Cor. ii. 14.

so great things for us, is represented, before He becomes this Divine food for our souls.

4. The Paschal Lamb was a figure of this Sacrament,* and so St. Paul himself saith it was, "Christ our Passover, or our Paschal Lamb is sacrificed for us, therefore let us keep the Feast."†

Now of the old Passover this was the ceremony; it must be a lamb without blemish, of a year old; it must be eaten at Jerusalem, roasted, and in haste, with wild lettuce and sweet bread; those who should eat thereof must have their shoes on their feet; by which ceremony God signified unto the Jews, that they were strangers in Egypt, as we all are in this world: and further, we are hereby admonished of divers duties required in our Christian Passover.

St. Chrysostom, in the 83d Homily upon Matthew, applieth that ceremony unto us. If, saith he, the Jews about to go only through Palestine were fed with a lamb after so careful an order, with what vigilance ought we to feed in this Sacrament on the true immaculate Lamb, who have our journey to Heaven! Let us eat thereof in His Church, eat with charity, going forward to our land of rest. In the 25th of Leviticus, verse 2, God saith, "You shall eat of the old fruit, until the new come." So did his people of the old Passover: as they were delivered from Egypt, so were we

* Exodus xii. 3. † 1 Cor. v. 7, 8.

from a worse servitude. Of the Paschal and Typical Lamb, a bone must not be broken: no more was there of our true Lamb upon the Cross: *sacrificate filium*, sacrifice my son; so *sinite hos abire*, let these go.*

5. A figure of this Holy Sacrament was manna, given to the people of Israel in the desert.† St. Paul also in effect saith as much, where he doth mention the two Sacraments, that the Red sea was a figure of Baptism, and manna of this Holy Sacrament. We did all eat, saith he, of one spiritual meat, indeed our manna is a spiritual meat.‡

The manna had these properties.

First, although some gathered much and others less, yet there was a sufficient measure for all; so in this Sacrament of the Lord's Supper, there is a sufficient measure according to the measure of faith.

Secondly, manna might be gathered any day except the Sabbath; when the sun arose, it vanished; so this Heavenly manna serveth us until the everlasting Sabbath of the life to come; and when the Sun of Glory shall appear it shall then cease.

Thirdly, manna did give taste of all kinds according unto the will of the eater. This manna hath sweetness unto the faith of the faithful receiver, so disposed.

Fourthly, many of the Jews were very grievous-

* John xviii. 8. † Exodus xvi 15. ‡ 1 Cor. x. 3, 4.

ly punished, for that they contemned manna, saying, Our souls loatheth this light meat.* So St. Paul sheweth, That in his time many were sick and weak among them of Corinth, for that this Divine Sacrament was despised, and many unworthily communicated.†

Fifthly, manna was called angels' food,‡ so that manna came down from Heaven.‖

Sixthly, the taste of that manna was like the taste of cakes mixed with oil and honey, sweet; what more sweet to the soul than the Blessed Sacrament.

Seventhly, they that ate of that manna died;§ they that eat of this manna shall live forever.¶

6. The sixth figure was the Ark; for like as the Ark, saith Thomas Aquinas, was made of Shittim wood,** that is to say, of shining and pure cedar: so was this, of the most pure Body of the Son of God.

Again, the Ark was gilded within and without; which may resemble the wisdom and love of Christ. There were three things in the ark of special note: the golden pot, the rod of Aaron, and the two tables of the law.

The golden pot, containing manna, may betoken the soul of Christ, containing the fulness of the Deity; the rod of Aaron His Priestly power; the

* Numbers xxi. 5. † 1 Cor. xi. 30. ‡ Psalm lxxviii. 25.
‖ John vi. 51. § John vi. 49. ¶ Ibid. vi. 51.
** Exodus xxv. 10.

two tables, that He was the Eternal Law-maker. But the Holy Scripture maketh mention of two things principally, concerning the Ark, which do marvellously appear in this Sacrament: the one, that by the benefit of the Ark the people were not only preserved, but much prospered: the other, that God grievously punished those who unworthily treated His Ark, or gave not worthy reverence unto the same. We read, when the people of Israel, in one war against the Philistines, had lost four thousand men, they procured that the ark was brought into their tents, hoping by the presence thereof to obtain the victory;* but the contrary happened, for the ark of God was taken by the enemy, and thirty thousand men perished of the host of Israel for their perverse life and small piety, having such a Presence amongst them.

The Philistines also, who unworthily handled the Ark, setting it with their idol Dagon, how sharply were they punished? But chiefly the men of Ashdod, as that Holy Scripture saith, "The hand of God was heavy upon them:"† but the house of Obededom, who received the Ark dutifully, prospered.

7. A figure of this sacrament was the meal of Elisha.‡

When the prophet commanded that certain herbs should be seethed for the children of the

* 1 Samuel iv. 3. † Ibid v. 6. ‡ 2 Kings iv. 38, 41.

prophets, they, tasting them, found that they were so bitter, that they cried to Elisha, "O man of God, death is in the pot;" wherefore, the holy prophet cast meal into the pot, wherewith he took away the bitterness: so Christ, by meal or bread of the Sacrament, taketh away the bitterness of our afflictions, and causeth that they bring us life and not death.

8. A figure of this most holy institution was that great Passover which king Hezekiah kept,* when he prayed for the people, that God would be merciful unto him that prepared his heart to seek the Lord God of his fathers, though he were not cleansed according to the purification of the Sanctuary, when he spake comfortably unto the Levites, and the whole multitude, who kept the feast with great joy. Our Hezekiah hath not only prayed for the purifying of His people, but hath sanctified them, spoken comfortably, kept a joyful Passover, such as never was in Israel.

Last of all, a prophecy of this our Passover was that, "Send ye a lamb to the ruler of the land from Sela to the wilderness, unto the mount of the daughter of Zion."†

* 2 Chron. xxx. 18, 19. † Isaiah xvi. 1.

## CHAPTER LII.

NAMES OF EXCELLENCE ATTRIBUTED UNTO THE HOLY SACRAMENT; AND GATHERED OUT OF THE WRITINGS OF THE ANCIENT FATHERS.

O { Great, Inestimable, Divine, Most noble } Sacrament.

O { Pure, Venerable, Eternal, Laudable } Mystery.

O Mystery of { Piety, Peace.

O { Holy of Holies, Blessed, Hidden Manna.

## CHAPTER LIII.

### A SHORT MEDITATION ON THESE NAMES OF EXCELLENCY.

WHAT couldest Thou do, most merciful Lord, for us and for our good, that Thou hast not done? Thou hast taken our frail nature upon Thee, and given us the Divine; Thou hast freely offered unto us the riches of Thy mercy, the treasures of Thy grace; the abundance of Thy love, by this great, inestimable, and most Divine Sacrament, by this blessed, pure, and venerable Mystery, the Mystery of peace and piety, the Holy of Holies, the hidden manna; whereby it is evident, with what flames of love Thou didst burn, Whose delight is to be with the sons of men;* the fruit of Whose love is to shew mercy; and because the fire of this love could no longer be hid, it must needs break out by this Holy Mystery, left unto us; for which, O Lord, we give unto Thee honour, praise, power, and dominion, now and for evermore. Amen.

* Proverbs viii. 31.

## CHAPTER LIV.

CERTAIN SHORT MEDITATIONS UPON THE PASSION: TO BE USED BEFORE OR AFTER THE RECEIVING OF THE HOLY COMMUNION.

O GOOD and gracious Jesus, Thou didst eat the Paschal Lamb in Jerusalem, with Thy dear beloved disciples, and arising from Supper, didst gird Thyself about with a towel, and poured water into a basin, and kneeling upon Thy knees, Thou meekly didst wash the feet of Thy disciples, and wiped them with a towel.

O most good and gracious Jesu, Thou, before Thou should suffer did bequeath a most excellent good thing unto Thy children, as a fatherly legacy, leaving for us Thy most Sacred Body to be our meat, and Thy most precious Blood to be our drink: there can no wit nor understanding penetrate and thoroughly see the bottomless depth of Thy charity.

O most good and gracious Jesu, Thou coming to the Garden of Olives, began to fear, and to be heavy, whereupon Thou didst say to Thy disci-

ples, "My soul is sorrowful unto death:" and then divided and sundered from them. Thou settest Thyself upon Thy knees, and falling upon the earth flat on Thy face, Thou prayedst unto Thy Father, and fully and wholly resignedst and yieldest Thyself unto Him, saying, Father, Thy will be done. And at length, through a most painful agony, wherewith Thou wert grievously oppressed and afflicted, Thou didst sweat throughout all Thy Body, a bloody sweat.

O good and gracious Jesu, Thou, kindled and burning with an ineffable desire to redeem, wentest to meet Thine enemies, and suffered Judas, the traitor, to kiss Thee, Thyself to be taken, and to be bound with all confusion and shame, and most unworthily to be led unto Annas, where Thou suffered most meekly to be stricken on Thy most innocent face.

O good and gracious Jesu, Thou, being fast bound like a notorious malefactor, wast led unto the house of Caiphas the high priest, where the Jews most unjustly accused Thee, most spitefully struck and buffeted Thee, scornfully wast Thou mocked and blindfolded, being bidden to prophecy who strake Thee, doing to Thee innumerable injuries all the night.

O good and gracious Jesu, Thou in the morning wast brought before Pilate, and with most sweet and pleasant countenance, casting Thine eyes down

stood before him in the judgment hall; and when Thou wast most falsely accused of the Jews, and many a rebuke and reproach given Thee, Thou meekly held Thy peace, and made no answer.

O good and gracious Jesu, Thou wast sent from Pilate to Herod. This Herod, of a very curious and vain mind, coveting to see some miracle at Thy hand, asked and demanded many things of Thee; the Jews cried out against Thee, but Thou, amongst all these, most wisely held Thy peace. For this cause Herod and all his, despised Thee. O how immeasurable was this humility and obedience? At the will and pleasure of thine enemies, Thou wentest forth, Thou returnedst again, suffering them to do with Thee what they would.

O good and gracious Jesu, Thou in the judgment hall, being stripped naked, and without any compassion bound fast to a pillar, was most cruelly scourged, there was Thy virginal and tender flesh cut with whips, and torn with stripes, altogether mangled and deformed with black and blue, and many a wound, so that the streams of Thy most precious Blood ran down on every side upon the earth.

O good and gracious Jesu, after that sore and sharp scourging of Thine, to put Thee unto more shame, Thou wast clothed with a purple garment, vile and torn; they also, making a crown of thorns, painfully pressed the same upon Thy most Holy

Head; and while the sharp thorns pricked grievously and wounded sore Thy head, Thy most pure Blood ran down abundantly over all Thy lovely face and neck; then they putting a reed into Thy right hand, and kneeling down before Thee in scorn, saluted Thee saying, "All hail, King of the Jews."

O good and gracious Jesu, Thou wast brought forth by Pilate unto the furious Jews, to be gazed and looked upon, wearing Thy crown of thorns and purple garment; but they cried out with more cruelty to have Thee crucified.

O good and gracious Jesu, Thou wast delivered up unto the will and pleasure of the Jews, who by and by led Thee to be crucified, laying Thy heavy cross upon Thy sore and bloody shoulders; thus didst thou bear most meekly Thine own cross, whose great weight pained Thee full sore, and coming unto the place of Thy suffering, all weary and breathless with pain, for my sake Thou didst not refuse to taste wine mingled with gall and myrrh, which was there given unto Thee.

O good and gracious Jesu, when thou wast stripped naked, then were Thy sore wounds, by the violent plucking off Thy clothes, renewed. O what a bitter and cruel pain didst Thou suffer, when Thy tender hands and undefiled feet were with blunt and rough nails fast nailed unto the cross, and when the joints of Thy limbs were loosed. O with what love and sweetness of char-

ity didst Thou offer Thy hands and feet to be bored through. Then out of the wounds of Thy hands and feet, as it had been out of wells, Thy precious Blood plentifully gushed out.

O good and gracious Jesu, Thou hanging upon the cross between two thieves wast assailed with blasphemies, but Thou prayedst unto the Father the while, saying, "Father, forgive them, they wot not what they do." Then didst Thou promise Paradise unto the thief, then gavest Thou Thy dear beloved mother, who, pierced with the sword of sorrow, stood by the cross, unto Thy beloved disciple John; and after Thou hadst suffered three long hours' intolerable pains, and thirsted very vehemently, they gave Thee eysell to drink, which when Thou hadst tasted, bowing down Thy venerable head, Thou yieldest up Thy spirit. O what a disease was sin, which nothing could cure, but the death of the Physician.

O good and gracious Jesu, O good Shepherd, thus Thou bestowed Thyself for Thy sheep: the right side of Thy body was opened with a spear, out of which flowed both Water and Blood, mystically resembling the two Sacraments; for us Thou wouldest that Thy loving and tender heart should be wounded; afterward Thy immaculate Body be taken down from the cross, Joseph and Nicodemus winding it up in sindon or clean linen, laying it in a new sepulchre. Grant, O Lord, that we

may by faith lay up this Thy blessed Body in clean affections, and in the new sepulchre of a devout and religious heart. Amen.

### A PRAYER UPON THE PASSION.

O Son of the living God, most mighty, Who for the exceeding great charity that Thou didst bear towards me hast vouchsafed to be made man, Thou wouldest for my sake be born in a stable and laid in a manger, be fed with the little milk of the maiden Thy mother, suffer neediness and poverty, be sore troubled three and thirty years with manifold labours and careful pains; Thou wouldest for very inward pain and agony be all in a Bloody sweat, and be apprehended and taken, shamefully be bound, unworthily be condemned, unjustly be stricken with buffets and blows, be clothed in purple by way of mockery; Thou wouldest be beaten and torn most cruelly with stripes, crowned with thorns, overladen with a painful and heavy Cross, and be nailed and fastened to the same Cross; Thou, the clother and garnisher of the stars, hangest, all naked, despised, wounded and with innumerable sorrows afflicted, upon the Cross for my sake; Thou sheddest for me Thy most pure and precious Blood; all this Thou didst for me. I embrace in the arms of my soul Thy venerable passion, I forsake and renounce

all sensual pleasure, I resign myself wholly into Thy hands; Thine only will, O Lord, Thine only will be done in me.

O most sweet and merciful Jesu, mortify whatsoever liveth sensually in me, garnish and adorn me with Thy merits and virtues: O prepare, Lord, a delectable and pleasant habitation for Thyself in me, renew my spirit, my soul, and my body, with Thy excellent grace, knit me unto Thee most nearly, change and transform me altogether in Thee, that Thou mayest still have delight in me. Hear me graciously, O Lord, hear me graciously, for Thine infinite mercies' sake. Amen.

## A PRAYER OF ST. AUGUSTINE.

*Meditation* i. 7.

What hast Thou committed, most sweet Child, that Thou shouldest be so judged? What hast Thou offended, most loving innocent, that Thou shouldest be so hardly treated? What is Thy offence? What is Thy fault? What is the cause of Thy death, and occasion of Thy condemnation? I it is that am the wound of Thy sorrow, the cause of Thy slaughter: I am the desert of Thy death, the wickedness of Thy punishment, the stroke of Thy passion, the labour of Thy torment. O wonderful manner of correction, and order of unspeak-

able Mystery! the wicked offendeth, and the just is punished; the guilty transgresseth, and the innocent is beaten; the unjust sinneth, and the just is condemned; that which the evil deserveth, the good suffereth; and what the servant committeth, the Lord dischargeth; what man hath offended, God satisfieth.

Whither, O Son of God, whither hath Thy humility descended, whither hath Thy charity burnt? Whither hath Thy pity proceeded, Thy benignity increased? Whither hath Thy love attained, whither hath Thy compassion extended? For I have done wickedly, and Thou art punished; I have committed the offence, and Thou art chastened with revenge; I have done the fault, and Thou art subjected to torment; I have waxen proud, and Thou art humbled; I am puffed up, and Thou art diminished; I became disobedient, and Thou payedst the punishment of disobedience; I gave myself to gluttony, and Thou art afflicted with hunger. The tree carried me to unlawful desire, perfect charity led Thee to the tree of Thy cross; I tasted of the forbidden fruit, and Thou layest under the torment; I am delighted with meat, and Thou labourest at the door; I enjoy delicacies, and Thou art torn in pieces with nails. I taste the sweetness of an apple, Thou tastedst the bitterness of gall. Eve rejoiceth laughing with me, Mary suffereth wailing with Thee. Behold, Thou King of Glory, be-

hold my impiety, and Thy pity shineth: behold my unrighteousness, and Thy righteousness appeareth. What, O my King, and my God, what shall I render Thee for all Thy benefits which Thou hast bestowed on me? For there cannot be found in man's heart what may worthily be rendered for such rewards; can the sharpness of man's wit devise whereunto the mercy of God may be compared? Nor is it in the power of the creature to recompense the sufficiency of the Creator; but there is, O Son of God, there is in this so admirable dispensation, that on which my own weakness may in some things rely; if my mind, pricked with Thy visitation, crucify her flesh, with the vices and concupiscenses thereof; and this thing, when Thou hast granted it, beginneth now, as it were, to suffer with Thee; for that Thou hast vouchsafed to die for my sin; and so by the victory of the inward man, by the conflict, it shall be armed to the outward triumph; forasmuch, as, this spiritual persecution overcome, it may not fear for Thy love to yield itself unto the material sword; and so the smallness of my condition, if it please Thy goodness, shall be able for her power, to answer the greatness of the Creator. I pray Thee for Thy accustomed mercies, pour into my wounds that, (the rancour of my viperous infection cast forth,) may restore me to my wonted health, that, tasting the nectar of Thy sweetness, it may cause

me to despise with all my heart, the pleasant allurements of this world, and to fear no adversity thereof, for Thy sake; and being mindful of my eternal nobility, I may loathe the winds of this transitory fear. Let nothing be sweet, I pray Thee, unto me, without Thee; nothing please me, nothing precious, nothing beautiful, beside Thee. Let all things, I beseech Thee, be vile unto me without Thee; let them be of no account; that which is contrary to Thee, let it be troublesome unto me; and let Thy good-will be my continual desire.—Let it grieve me to rejoice without Thee, and delight me to be sorrowful for Thee. Let Thy name be my comfort, and the memory of Thee my consolation. Let tears be my bread day and night, in searching out Thy judgments. Let Thy law be better unto me than millions of gold and silver.—Let it be delightful unto me to walk in the way of Thy commandments unto the end. So be it.

## CHAPTER LVI.

THE TWELFTH MEDITATION, CONCERNING THE SPIRITUAL COMMUNION OF CHRIST, WHEN THE SACRAMENTAL MAY NOT BE HAD.

FOR that the Spiritual Communion also is profitable unto souls, it is necessary that we enter into some consideration of the same, and therein observe these circumstances: first, what it is; secondly, after what means it may be used; thirdly, what profit we reap by it; fourthly, how acceptable it is to God.

For the first, we must know, that as the Sacramental Communion hath worthily the first place amongst the spiritual exercises of a Christian life, so also the Spiritual Communion hath a very Godly and Divine use. When the devout man, saith Gerson, doth every day receive Spiritually the Body and Blood of his Redeemer, so often doth he Mystically Communicate the Mystery of Christ's Blessed Passion, inflamed in His love, and resolved into devotion towards Him; so often as we receive Christ in affection and desire of mind, (which

the faithful often should do,) this is called our Spiritual Communion.

For the second, what commodity this bringeth unto the soul we may gather by the manifold effects thereof; for as he who moved by the Holy Ghost believeth, sorroweth for his sins, and by loving God desireth Spiritually to be Baptized, doth obtain the grace of Sacramental Baptism, which desire of Baptism, is called by the Divines, *Baptisma Spiritus*, "The Baptism of the Spirit," so doth it also happen in this Spiritual Communion.

The third, how we reap profit by receiving Christ into the Holy desires of our souls, it may be understood by the increase of love: "While I was musing," saith the Prophet, "The fire kindled."—The elevation of the mind unto God doth take us away from earthly affections, and carry us unto Him on Whom our desires are wholly fixed.

The fourth, how acceptable this is unto God, we may easily know, for He that accepted the intention of Abraham in offering up his son, and said unto Solomon, "because this was in thy heart," He doth accept of our good desires to embrace Him in the arms of our affection, and also doth reward this desire as a deed done. But we are to consider that we must not always stay upon the desire of our will, and only receive Christ spiritually, but we must proceed further to receive Him together, both Spiritually and Sacramentally, so often as possibly

we can. For it is not enough to follow Christ in our intention, or in this case barely to believe, but we must also receive Him in this Holy Mystery, which is not only a representation of Christ's death, but also a participation of the benefits proceeding from the same; participation we have with Christ, either by imputation or by actual infusion; by imputationwhen it is said, "Believe and live;" by actual infusion either where it is said, "Wash and be clean," or "communicate and live."

## CHAPTER LVII.

THAT THIS HOLY SACRAMENT IS GIVEN TO THE SICK AS NECESSARY FOR THE TIME OF THE LAST AGONY.

CONSIDER that among the manifold fruits of this Heavenly Sacrament, that is to be accounted to be a principal one, that it maketh the Son of God himself to abide in us, and us in Him; now in our greatest extremities to have a pledge of Christ's abode in us, and of our abode in Him, what more comfortable?

From hence it was that the Holy Sacrament was wont to be administered to faithful people in danger of death, that they might be constant in the confession of Christ, and able to withstand the temptations of the devil; to strengthen them in taking the cup of affliction, by taking the cup of salvation.

2. Consider, that it also profiteth in attaining the health of the body, seeing it is so available to the salvation of the soul. For if at the only touch of Christ's garment, many received health, what can-

not Christ Himself do, entering into the soul of the sick.

3. Consider, that Christ knowing what His Apostles should need, and what we should all need, strength against afflictions; yea, foreseeing our conflict to come, ordained this most Holy Sacrament, for the spiritual help of our souls. We must, therefore, think that by how much greater necessity we labour, by so much this Sacrament doth exercise more effectually wholesome effects, seeing it is proper unto the Lord to help more readily then, when greatest necessity doth require help.

4. Consider, that here the distressed either in body or mind, may apply unto himself in particular the merits of Christ's Passion, and raise up himself by a comfortable participation of this Holy Mystery, and say, thou hast good cause to rejoice, O my soul, that the Lord of Majesty cometh unto thee, that He may comfort thee departing this world, and be thy assistant help against the assaults of Satan, who endeavoureth to draw thee away from the reward of life; continue only a good will for all, though thou art faint and feeble, though thine enemies be many and mighty, yet having received Divine strength thou shalt say, I can do all things in Him that strengthened me.

Cast all thy hopes on Jesus, and thou shalt neither be overcome of them, nor put to shame. Thou

knowest well that the body of a certain dead man was restored to life by the only touch of the body of Elisha.* If the bones of a dead prophet had so great virtue, that they restored one from death to life, and the thieves, amazed by the miracle of the thing, durst do no evil; what will not the living and glorious Body of Jesus do, entering into thee? I doubt not, but it will increase greater might in thee, seeing He is God omnipotent and Lord of all, and the devil shall be overcome and confounded at His presence.

O good God, teach me how I ought to give thanks unto my loving Lord, who seeing me in time of need, beset with infernal lions, doth send me food, not by the prophet Habakkuk, or by a Heavenly Angel, but Himself cometh to be my food, that, fainting, I receive comfort.

Consider, O my soul, this unspeakable mercy. Thou knowest thou wast loved of thy Redeemer, in His greatest extremities, when He, departing out of this life to the Father, did then institute this Holy Sacrament for thy welfare. Thou seest also He loveth thee in thy extremities, it remaineth that thou crying out with the prophet David, say, "Lord, what is man that thou art so mindful of him;"† or with the Apostle, "If I live, I live unto the Lord; if I die, I die unto the Lord: whether I live or die, I am the Lord's."‡

* 2 Kings xiii. 21. † Psalm viii. 4. ‡ Romans xiv. 8.

## CHAPTER LVIII.

WHAT HE OUGHT TO DO WHO IS UPON SHORT WARNING TO COMMUNICATE, BEFORE HE COME TO THE HOLY TABLE OF THE LORD.

HE who will do the thing which he ought to do concerning this Sacrament, and that which the dignity of such a Mystery doth require, must set out a certain space of time to himself, wherein he may perform those things which pertain to the preparation thereunto.

He shall do very well, if as Moses commanded the people, that before they were to receive the Law, they should prepare themselves. So also he who is now about to receive the Law of life, should at least make some preparation unto the receiving of the same.

The Holy Scriptures do testify, that the maids of king Ahasuerus* coming only into his sight but once, six months prepared themselves with oil of myrrh, and other six months with certain sweet odours.

* Esther ii. 12.

If these did do this, that they might find favour with an earthly man, what preparation think we is required of us, that we may find favour in the sight of the King of kings?

One of the chiefest praises of the Blessed Virgin Mary, for which the Angel did commend her, he sheweth when he saith "Thou hast found favour with God;" and ought it to seem a hard and troublesome thing unto us, to do, for so great glory and dignity, that which these women have done for such vanity? With what face, I pray, will we refuse labour, yea, although all the powers and strength of our souls and bodies were to be employed, that we may but at least come into the grace and favour of God? specially when we hear that these miserable maids spent their whole life that they might come into the favour of one mortal man; but because this is a hard thing for us to do, let us prepare ourselves (as the shortness of time will permit) in doing all that which in us lieth. But if you shall ask me what that is, I answer in a word, a lifting up of the soul to God.

## CHAPTER LIX.

### THE MANNER OF COMMUNICATING USED BY A CERTAIN VIRGIN.

*In prav. vit. spirit.*

BEFORE I communicate I prepare myself after this manner: some two days before I examine my own conscience, I humbly confess me of my sins to God, I am heartily sorry for my sins; when I may not fast, at the least I eat and drink sparingly.

2. The next morning I begin sooner than at other times a prayer in my mind; in preparing my mind I crave the assistance of God, to communicate sincerely, and that He make me such a one as I ought to be, coming to His Holy Table, that this most Holy Sacrament may obtain in my heart, that fruit which it obtaineth in the hearts of those who worthily communicate.

3. Then I consider how great a thing it is to be partaker of so Holy a mystery, to receive Him whom the Angels adore, the Prophets have desired, the Apostles loved, the Martyrs imitated, and

all Holy men coveted, with unspeakable desire to honour, love, and unite them unto Him by this Holy Sacrament.

4. Moved with this desire, I study to inflame my soul more largely by considering Christ's unspeakable love, by calling to mind the manifold graces this Sacrament bringeth with it to the soul of the devout Communicant.

5. When I come to communicate I exercise my heart in these contemplations; first, I call to mind my own vileness; secondly, I cast myself down at the feet of Jesus my only Saviour and Redeemer; thirdly, I make a short confession of my faith, as, I believe in God, &c.

6. Sometimes I talk thus with my soul, saying, Behold, my soul, thy Lord and God, I love Him Whom thou desirest, account thyself happy in receiving Him, love Him and desire Him to dwell with thee.

7. Lastly, I lay before Him all my sins and infirmities in the depth of my heart, and I most fervently desire that he would pardon them all, and I purpose earnestly to amend what hath been amiss, and so with all humble reverence I come to the Lord's Table.

*My demeanour after this short form of preparing myself.*

After this short form of preparing myself, I be-

take me to some secret place, that I may talk only with my Lord, Whom I have by faith received into the house of my soul; and, first, I set before God the Father the Holy Sacrifice of Christ our Lord, and I set before Him whatsoever He hath suffered for me, using these or the like words. Behold, O Eternal Father, Thy Son, Whom of Thy infinite love Thou hast sent from Heaven unto the earth, that He might take flesh of man, be born in a stable, fly into Egypt by the persecution of Herod, and should be in great poverty. Behold, O Father, what great things He hath done and suffered for me in the wilderness, in preaching, in fasting, in praying, in journeying, in persecutions of the Jews, in hearing blasphemies, sustaining injuries and reproaches, all which He suffered at the hands of the ungrateful Jews, see Him betrayed and sold for thirty pence. I offer Him unto Thee, O Holy Father, bound in the garden, led away to Annas, beaten and buffeted in the house of Caiaphas, accused before Pilate, mocked of Herod, scourged and crucified of the Jews. Behold, O Father, His head hanging down, His hands and feet pierced through, His most sacred side opened.

Behold the Heavens and Earth mourning after their manner, the sorrowful Mother, the dear disciples bewailing Him, and the ungrateful Jews by so much the more to wax mad against Him. I offer

Him unto Thee, anointed with myrrh, wrapped in clean linen, buried in a new sepulchre. These things done, I make an end, praising, blessing, and giving thanks to God, that He hath loved us so that He gave His only Son for our Salvation.

2. After this I turn me unto Christ with all thankfulness for His benefits, and I open unto Him as unto a most holy Physician my infirmities and all my faults, as to a most gentle Lord; I open unto Him all my defects, into which I am wont to fall, desiring Him to minister a remedy, that I relapse not so often, and specially I pray that He would grant me grace to receive Him hereafter worthily.

3. I purpose to amend wherein I am wont to offend, and namely, I decree to root out some one sin, and in the place thereof to insert some virtue whereof I have need, that I may always go forward from better to better; and I humbly pray God's Divine Majesty that He grant me strength to execute that thing.

4. Last of all, I diligently keep my heart all that day, thinking that the Lord resteth therein as His house, wherefore I give my endeavour, that I may use all modesty, as well in speaking, seeing, and walking, as in all my outward conversation: often I say with myself, this day, O Lord, Thou hast vouchsafed to come unto me a sinner, this day Thou hast renewed my heart by Thy Holy Pas-

sion, I pray Thee abide with me, go not from me. And so applying myself unto the prayers of the day, I use the same prayers with greater devotion than ordinary, I give thanks for all benefits, especially for those received by this most High and Holy Sacrament.

## CHAPTER LX.

CERTAIN BRIEF QUESTIONS AND ANSWERS CONCERNING THE BLESSED SACRAMENT.

Q. FOR what cause do you receive the Blessed Sacrament?

A. First, that I may observe and dutifully keep Christ's most Holy Institution.

Secondly, That I may shew myself a member of that Body whereof He is the Head.

Thirdly, That I may receive this sovereign repast to the strengthening of my faith and the health of my sinful soul.

Q. What do you receive?

A. The very Body and Blood of Christ, after a most Divine and Heavenly manner.

Q. What profit have you by receiving?

A. Increase of grace and love with God and man, and a pledge of the eternal inheritance, purchased for me in Heaven.

Q. Why do you often Communicate?

A. Because my hope is, I am one of God's

children, and therefore do desire to come often unto Him, as to a loving Father.

Q. After what manner come you?

A. By Faith and Repentance, having a full purpose to serve Him in Holiness and Righteousness all the days of my life.

## CHAPTER LXI.

THESE FEW OBSERVATIONS SHOULD BE OBSERVED BY US BEFORE OUR ACCESS UNTO THE SACRAMENT OF THE LORD'S SUPPER.

YOU must steadfastly believe in Christ crucified.

2. You must humble yourself by a serious consideration of your manifold sins.

3. You must think Christ worketh in you that which His words do promise you.

4. You must prepare your soul to receive the Body and Blood of our Lord Jesus Holily.

5. You must meditate of Christ's Passion, His Resurrection, and your own rising again to a better life to come.

6. You must give yourself, both before and after this most Holy Sacrament, to prayer and devotion.

7. You must apply yourself to meditation, and open unto God the closet of your heart.

8. You must bear sincere affection and love, both to God and man.

## CHAPTER LXII.

A DIALOGUE OF THE MOST HOLY COMMUNION BETWEEN MUNDANUS AND SPIRITUALIS; A WORLDLY MAN AND SPIRITUAL MAN:

Wherein is disputed, whether it be better often to communicate or abstain from the most Holy Communion; how, and after what manner both may be done; that of Love and Devotion, this of Humility and Reverence.

MUNDANUS. I know not truly what fruit there is by often Communicating; for I see thee continue subject unto the same vices thou wert before subject to; and live as carelessly as thou didst before.

*Spirit.* But I know certainly that by the benefit of often Communicating, I have rooted out some evil manners, and unless I should often Communicate, without doubt I should be worse and worse, and haply at this hour I should burn in hell fire.

*Mund.* Whence knowest thou, that thou shouldest be worse and worse?

*Spirit.* For that I have experience in myself when the time of Communicating is at hand, I

bethink myself more and more carefully to abstain, yea, from the least sins. Contrariwise, when the time of Communicating is further off, I am not so recollected in mind, I wax also faint in devotion, I am prone unto vanities and trifles; and if no other profit should come unto my soul, that profit alone ought to be sufficient to move me to frequent this Divine Sacrament.

*Mund.* But I fear not a little, lest if I come too often to the Lord's Table, I make shipwreck both of love and fear, for that is wont to fall out by too often use and familiarity.

*Spirit.* Yea rather the contrary doth often fall out in this Divine Duty. For if by the often and familiar custom and frequenting of the Communion, any imperfection were therein covered, there were just cause to diminish our love and fear toward Him, as it cometh to pass in human things. But that thing is not so in this Holy Service: for when He Whom we receive is a certain infinite sea of all perfection, by how much one useth this often, by so much the more he declareth his goodness and perfections, and causeth that love, fear, and reverence towards His Divine Majesty do daily increase.

*Mund.* Let it be as it is, daily experience teacheth that the often use of a thing, although the best, doth breed contempt and loathsomeness.

*Spirit.* That is in things temporal, and in sen-

sual pleasures, but in spiritual delights as St. Gregory hath well observed, satiety doth breed a desire, for then the goodness of them is made known; and therefore by how much the more they are possessed, by so much the more ardently they are desired: whence the Heavenly wisdom saith, "They which eat Me do still hunger, and they which drink Me do still thirst."

*Mund.* But St. Paul saith, "He that eateth and drinketh unworthily, eateth and drinketh his own damnation," but if thou Communicate often, it seemeth thou thinkest thyself worthy? and is not this pride? Thou also herein dost unworthily Communicate.

*Spirit.* As if to communicate seldom doth make a man worthy. It is not so; but hear me, if thou callest him worthy whose perfection doth equal the worthiness of this Sacrament, then no creature, although the holiest, can be worthy. And if such worthiness were absolutely necessary, none should Communicate; for that none can attain perfection equal to the worthiness of this Sacrament: yet a man may in some sort be said to be worthy, who according to the advice of the Apostle St. Paul,* doth examine his conscience, and who doth and saith with him in the Gospel, "I believe, Lord, help my unbelief."†

*Mund.* If this be sufficient, wherefore then did

* 1 Cor. xi. 28. † Mark ix. 24.

certain godly men of reverence speak so often of effectually preparing themselves as they have done ?

*Spirit.* These of humility and reverence to this Holy Mystery, have spoken indeed of solemn preparation, which assuredly is meet ; but to the matter in question, frequenting of this Holy Communion is a most ancient custom, wherewith the Church first sprang, as St. Luke the Evangelist in the Acts of the Apostles sheweth.

*Mund.* But in the primitive Church the ferventness of Christians was great, which is not now in us, it seemeth more safe to abstain from often Communicating, for if it be otherwise it is in danger that we come not so disposed to Communicate as we ought to come. The safer way is rather to be held than the less safe.

*Spirit.* Yea the selfsame thing, for that so great desire is wanting in us, ought to drive us to frequent this wholesome Sacrament ; for by the benefit thereof we may both wax hot, and be set on fire in the love of God. For he who is cold ought rather to betake himself to the fire, than he who is hot. So often as one humbleth himself before God, and hath a firm faith in Christ, and a good intention to live holily, it is commendable.

*Mund.* I have often heard the Sacraments are instituted of Christ as medicines, but we use not medicines often.

*Spirit.* If a man were spiritually sick, but sometimes, then the argument were available: but whereas we are in a quotidian of sin, and our nature is weak; for, "The just man falleth seven times a day," saith the Wise Man: our nature therefore, often needeth help, and so the use of a spiritual medicine. Moreover, whereas this Sacrament is of force to draw away evils, both present and to come, from the soul, it is better to prevent infirmity, than to cure it once contracted. Lastly, there is a great difference between corporeal medicines and this spiritual, for they only put away bodily diseases, and often with the evil humours take away the good also, but this only bringeth to the soul, grace, strength, and other Heavenly gifts, and therefore, these seldom; this often is to be used. Add, that for the most part bodily medicines are bitter and loathsome, to the intent, that as seldom as may be we use them; but this is sweet and delightful, and therefore God would, that it be often received of us.

*Mind.* But thou canst not deny, to abstain from the Holy Communion, for reverence sake, unto so great a Sacrament, to be of modesty, and agreeable to virtue.

*Spirit.* I deny not, but that to give reverence to it, is an action of modesty; yet, this I say, that to frequent this Communion of devotion, and desire of uniting oneself with Christ is a better ac-

tion; because this springeth of love, but that of fear, and it is manifest to all, that love is better than fear; wherefore it argueth a religious mind to Communicate often.

*Mund.* But I am unworthy so to do.

*Spirit.* Wherefore?

*Mund.* Because I fall daily into so many sins.

*Spirit.* If sins detain thee then shouldest thou never Communicate, because thou never ceasest to sin.

*Mund.* But communicating seldom, I have more time to examine myself.

*Spirit.* Thou art deceived; for seeing our nature is prone to evil, by how much the more grievously sins reign in it, by so much the harder are they to be gone; for a crooked tree, the longer the turning thereof is deferred, by so much the more hardly, and with greater pains it is made straight. We are as water, though it be sometimes heated, yet naturally it will wax cold again; we are as an instrument, which set aside, it will grow out of tune again.

*Mund.* I do not well understand what this my error is; for I see daily with mine eyes, those who often Communicate, to come coldly and without devotion, and as it were customarily to the Holy Table, and no more ado. But they who come seldom, come with far greater devotion and

reverence, as it seemeth to me, wherefore it is better to communicate seldom than often.

*Spirit.* First, that it is untrue, Mundanus, which thou affirmest, yea, rather, many of them who come so seldom, come most coldly, and without devotion, without feeling of love, rather indeed of custom and constraint, than of pious affection.

*Mund.* If it be better to communicate often than seldom, how cometh it to pass that this often Communicating is not praised of some learned men?

*Spirit.* I never read nor heard of any learned man endued with piety and judgment, that ever reprehended this action so Holy, so profitable, so acceptable to God; but that it is dispraised of some carnal men, it is no marvel, it is no disgrace to the sun, though bats and owls cannot endure it.

*Mund.* You say true; I acknowledge that it is more safe often to strengthen the soul with this Heavenly food; but I do it not, lest I give occasion to the world, of whom those that often Communicate are had in derision.

*Spirit.* If in this matter thou wilt have a regard of the world, then thou hast not only lost thy soul, but also thy wit. Art thou ignorant that it is the property of the world to flee from all spiritual things, to favour the wicked, and speak evil of the good?

*Mund.* As long as we are in the world, we

ought to frame ourselves, and conform our manners to the world.

*Spirit.* But that is manifest foolishness. If the world be one of thy three capital enemies, how mayest thou apply thee to it, and obey the will thereof without manifest and apparent ruin? Knowest thou what it is to abstain from the Sacred Communion for the obloquies of the world? No other thing than to be ashamed, and to account it a reproach, if thou art a good Christian, and endued with virtue; wherefore, and worthily too, may Christ be ashamed to receive thee into Heaven.

*Mund.* If I should often Communicate, I must repent often, become a good example unto others, keep me at home, cast off all recreations; which were to take away all my liberty from me, and so I should pine away, and wax old before my time.

*Spirit.* Although thou Communicatest but once in a year, thou art bound to repent, to give good example to others; neither art thou ignorant how great a sin it is to give a scandal to others. And the often communicating doth not take away recreations, but doth allow them, so they be lawful and honest. In that thou sayest thy liberty is taken away, it is not true; for, if thou dost think any thing forbidden, lawful unto thee not Communicating, thou art deceived; for whether thou Communicate often or seldom, thou art bound to abstain from sins. He

who for recreation offendeth his Creator, loseth true liberty, when he maketh himself a servant to sin; yea, he loseth true joy, which springeth of a good conscience, which, saith Solomon, "is a continual feast;" and in a feast there is joy, and this the foolish world doth not understand.

*Mund.* To the receiving of this most Holy Communion it is required that a man be of a quiet mind, which cannot be commonly brought to pass from the adversities and perturbations of this life.

*Spirit.* Yea, rather the afflictions of this life, and this wretched place of exile, ought to drive us to Communicate often. For amongst the effects of this Heavenly food, this one is mentioned, that it giveth strength in adversity, as the Prophet signifieth when he saith, "Thou hast prepared a Table in my sight, against those that trouble me."*

*Mund.* If I did perceive I were called of God extraordinarily to Communicate often, I would willingly obey.

*Spirit.* I pray when thou comest to thine ordinary prayers, when thou goest to Church dost thou perceive thou art called of God extraordinarily?

*Mund.* No.

*Spirit.* Why then doest thou these things?

*Mund.* For that they are commanded me in the

* Psalm xxiii. 5.

word of God, and seem to me good things, and are laid down as parts of God's worship.

*Spirit.* But the Holy Communion, without question, is a part of God's worship, and commanded in His word, and is so profitable, as it is called of the Church, the pledge of future glory.

*Mund.* Howsoever the matter is, to say the truth, I dare not come often to this Heavenly Table, by reason of my manifold imperfections that I so often fall into.

*Spirit.* It hath been answered to this before; either thou desirest to be delivered from these imperfections, or not to be delivered. If thou desire not to be delivered, thou art insensible of thy disease; and diseases which cause obstupefaction are dangerous. If thou desirest to be rid of them, this most Holy Sacrament, received with due preparation, will minister such strength that thou mayest by little and little remove them well.

*Mund.* I yield to thy reasons, and would gladly Communicate, but I feel no devotion.

*Spirit.* Perchance thou thinkest thou hast no devotion unless thou shed forth tears; that is not absolutely necessary, neither in these consisteth all devotion. The tears of the heart may suffice, that is, sorrow for thy sins past, and a purpose to prevent those to come. Moreover, he is called devout, who in all things conformeth himself unto God's will; wherefore I would not that thou

shouldest therefore abstain, because tears and sighs are wanting, for these are not always required; God giveth them to whom He pleaseth.

*Mund.* To say what I think, and that I may confess a truth, thou hast plainly persuaded me, that it is better to Communicate often than seldom; but one thing yet remaineth, I am loath to acknowledge my sins.

*Spirit.* If we acknowledge our sins, God is just to forgive us our sins.*

*Mund.* Many businesses do occur, which hinder this so weighty a matter; I mean, the work of repentance.

*Spirit.* This is the temptation of the devil, who, that he may spoil thee of the fruit of this Divine Sacrament, causeth that repentance seemeth troublesome unto thee, and the whole preparation to the Holy Communion. Furthermore, businesses do not hinder good works; the businesses of greater moment are to be preferred before the less. There is time to dispatch earthly affairs, but Heavenly are far above them; when the Son of God standeth and knocketh at the door of thy heart, open unto Him, let Him not knock in vain. To conclude, remember that the kingdom of Heaven suffereth violence, whence we see we must labour to attain the same.

*Mund.* It is even so, I must needs confess I am

* 1 John i. 9.

overcome; wherefore my resolution is, with God's grace, to repair often to the blessed Sacrament.

*Spirit.* Then shalt thou do that which appertains to a Christian to do.

## CHAPTER LXIII.

ANOTHER DIALOGUE, WHEREIN IS DISCUSSED THE DOCTRINE AND BENEFIT OF THE BLESSED SACRAMENT.

The speakers :—Catechumeus ; Doctor.

CATECHUMEUS. I desire to be instructed in the doctrine of the Holy Sacrament.

*Doct.* I confess thou mayest well desire to be instructed in this doctrine, for it is a Divine doctrine : the more I consider of it the more I admire the excellency thereof, which to me is more than words can express.

*Catech.* I can be content to submit myself to the judgment of the learned, without curious questioning.

*Doct.* Thou sayest well ; for my part I had rather by far commune with the humble-minded in this doctrine, than any other that is over curious. The goodness of God herein should with reverence be admired.

*Catech.* I rest satisfied in this case ; but I would learn of you, what might move me to love the Giver of so great a gift.

*Doct.* Thou speakest religiously; for words of devotion in this case are sweeter than honey, or the honeycomb. Now, the means to love the Author of this gift, is to consider His bounty how He doth herein offer Himself unto thee, and all the benefits of His blessed Passion.

*Catech.* I am moved with incredible joy to think of the innumerable benefits I receive hereby, and it stirreth me up to reverence and joy.

*Doct.* It may well do so, for what joy is here offered unto the faithful, the faithful do find; what may they not hope for at His hand, who hath given Himself unto them? what provokements to love and hope we have hence, there needs no long discourse to manifest and shew the same.

*Catech.* I acknowledge myself satisfied, beseeching God to make me a dutiful receiver of this most Holy Mystery, even for His mercies' sake. Amen.

*Doct.* To be a dutiful receiver thou must, before and after receiving, give thyself much to prayer, and observe other duties appertaining unto a careful Christian.

## CHAPTER LXIV.

### A PRAYER BEFORE THE RECEIVING OF THE COMMUNION.

O GOD, the Creator of all things, Omnipotent Father, Whose beginning had no beginning, Whose end doth exclude all end, Whom all things do acknowledge their Author; I, miserable and unworthy sinner, now about to repair to the High Feast of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ, have a troubled heart, a soiled body, a polluted tongue, a wounded conscience; I am greatly amazed, and I know not what to choose; if I come not, I fly life; if I come unworthily, I procure damnation. O high Divinity! O fearful Majesty! O pious Mercy! whither shall I go, or whither shall I fly? O wretch that I am, what shall I do! I have sinned against Heaven, and before Thee, and am no more worthy to be called Thy son; all sorrowful and sighing I strike my breast, and groaning, say, Woe is me, vile sinner, I have lost that which appertained to a son, but Thou still hast that that belongeth to an indulgent Father. Pardon, therefore, O Father, pardon, O most gentle Father, me, Thy

prodigal son, though late returning; reach out Thy hand of mercy from on High, and receive me in peace and favour, Who livest and reignest God from everlasting. Amen.

### ANOTHER PRAYER BEFORE THE COMMUNION.

Omnipotent and merciful God, behold I, an unworthy sinner, do come to the most Holy Sacrament of the Body and Blood of our Lord Jesus Christ; I come, I say, as the sick man to the physician, as the unclean to the fountain of mercy, as the blind to the light of eternal brightness, as a poor beggar to the King of Glory, as the naked to the Lord of Heaven and earth, as the needy to the riches of Heaven and earth. I beseech the abundance of Thy pity to heal mine infirmity, to wash my foulness, to enlighten my blindness, to enrich my poverty, to clothe my nakedness, that I may receive Thee, the bread of Angels, the King of kings, and Lord of lords. Grant that I may receive Thee with such respect and reverence, with such contrition and fear, with such faith and purity, with such a purpose and humility, as it is expedient for the health of my soul.

O Lord and Father, give to me, I beseech Thee, an unworthy sinner, not only to receive the Sacrament, but the virtue of the Sacrament. O most gentle God, grant me to receive the Body and

Blood of Thy only begotten Son, that I may be incorporated into His mystical Body, and be accounted as a member of the same. O most loving Father, grant me to receive Thy dearly beloved Son, and that Whom I now receive, as it were covered with a veil, I may one day behold in glory, Who liveth and reigneth with Thee, and the Holy Ghost, one God, world without end. Amen.

### A THANKSGIVING AFTER THE COMMUNION.

I yield Thee thanks, O Christ Jesu, for Thine ineffable love, that by Thy death Thou didst redeem mankind; I beseech Thee suffer not Thy Body to be broken, and Thy Holy Blood to be shed in vain for me, but with Thy Blessed Body feed my soul, with Thy Blood quicken my spirit, that increasing by little and little, I may become a fit member of Thy Church, which is Thy Mystical Body, and grant that I may never depart from that Holy League, but may continue therein, serving Thee in Holiness and Righteousness, all the days of my life. Amen.

### ANOTHER THANKSGIVING AFTER THE COMMUNION.

What tongue or what mind is able to give Thee sufficient thanks, O Lord Jesus, for Thy ineffable love towards us, Who to redeem man didst become

man. Thou tookest upon Thee all the injuries of our condition; and last of all, as a Lamb without spot, wast offered upon the altar of the Cross, all was to reconcile us to Thy Father. And not content with this Thy bounty towards us, but lest the memory of so great love should decay, Thou sitting in Heaven, dost, by Thy Holy Mysteries, refresh our souls here on earth.

David to shew his love to Jonathan, did honour his son by receiving him unto his kingly table; but how hast Thou honoured us who hast made partakers of Thy Heavenly Table? for which Thy Holy Name be praised, now and for evermore.—Amen.

### EJACULATORY, OR SHORT PRAYERS, TO BE USED AFTER THE RECEIVING OF THE HOLY COMMUNION.

O my Lord, Who art worthy of infinite love and glory, I humbly repent me that I have offended Thy Divine Majesty, I fully purpose to offend Thee no more, yea, though I should die.

Merciful and loving Lord, I execrate and detest my sins past, I resolve to sin no more in that manner, though I suffer all the labours of the world.

It displeaseth me, O King of infinite greatness that I offend Thee; from henceforth, I sacrifice

myself unto Thee, and I purpose to displease Thee no more.

I am sorry, O my Creator, for my great ingratitude; I will break off from all the desires of the world and the flesh, rather than commit that which shall offend Thee.

O Thou, who art the Author and Preserver of my life, I detest all works of sin because they offend Thee, I firmly purpose not to commit them again.

My most faithful Protector, it repenteth me that I have done evil in Thy sight; from henceforth I will do mine endeavour to abstain from sin.

I would not, O Lord, provoke Thee to anger any more, for all the riches of the world, yea, though I were to suffer a painful martyrdom.

I have gone astray, O infinite and eternal God of my soul, I have departed from Thee, for which I repent me; I will not depart from Thee any more, but will serve Thee with all faithful service.

O infinite Goodness, I would to God I had never so displeased Thee; I will never more return to the vomit of sin, but I will bethink me how I may please Thee.

O merciful Lord, Thou who madest Zacchæus, of an usurer, to become a just man; Thou that madest Matthew, of an extortioner, a contemner of the world; be merciful unto me, who do desire

nothing more than truly to serve Thee, for the time to come.

When the great Patriarch Abraham had obtained the victory against his enemies, the king of Salem, whom we call Melchizedek, for a thanksgiving, offered bread and wine unto Abraham, and withal to refresh his soldiers. We have offered unto God in the celebration of the Lord's Supper, our souls and bodies as a reasonable sacrifice to serve Him; here also we receive refreshing against our ghostly enemies.

God taught His people to eat the figurative lamb in haste, and forthwith to get them out of Egypt; we ought by the figure to discern that which was figured, and without delay to get us from the Egypt of a sinful life.

The Spouse saith, "I have put off my coat, how shall I put it on? I have washed my feet, how shall I defile them?"*

In the like manner may the faithful soul say, 'I have put off a sinful course of life, how shall I put it on again? I have repented me of sins committed, how should I commit them again?'

Lord, grant me the assistance of Thy grace, that the rest of my life may be Pure and Holy, so that at the last I may come to Thine everlasting glory. Amen.

* Canticles v. 3.

## CHAPTER LXV.

CAUSES WHY THE DAILY COMMUNION, OR THE CELEBRATION OF THE LORD'S SUPPER EVERY SABBATH DAY, IS NOT NOW IN USE, AS IT WAS IN THE PRIMITIVE CHURCH.

FOR that this was a precept of the Church, as Origen and St. Jerome do testify, like as that was of forsaking temporal riches; or temporary, or as fit for that age of the Church.

2. For that it was agreeable to the small number of Christians; so that this custom did by little and little decrease, as the number of Christians daily multiplied.

3. For that those times were times of persecution, and therefore the Christians lived in a continual farewell, as it were, from the world.

4. For that the charity of those times far exceeded ours that now live; to wit, love to God and men; they would have lamented their estate, if that their daily bread should have become a yearly bread.

5. For that they then had more feeling of the effects of this Holy Sacrament; to wit, how it did

*minuere sensum in minimis peccatis:* and how it did *tollere consensum in gravioribus*, as St. Bernard speaketh, take away the sense in lesser sins, by not committing them at all, and take away consent in greater.

6. For that the perfection of Christians in the primitive Church was far greater; and therefore assuredly the more often a Christian doth repair to the Holy Communion, the greater is his perfection, and the nearer he doth come to the piety of the ancient Christians.

## CHAPTER LXVI.

AN EXHORTATION UNTO THE HOLY COMMUNION, MOVING EVERY DEVOUT CHRISTIAN TO REPAIR OFTEN UNTO THE SAME.

I HOPE, gentle reader, thou perceivest well, by that which hath been formerly spoken, how much more excellent and profitable a thing it is, often to receive the most Blessed Body of Christ in the Eucharist, than to abstain from a meat so healthful and nourishing unto life. One thing yet remaineth, that thou, thoroughly regarding the unspeakable favour and bounty of so great a King, so cheerfully and so bountifully calling thee to His marriage feast, when He saith, "Take and eat, this is My Body," and again, "Do this in remembrance of Me," shouldest therefore with all speed and often, repair unto this banquet, lest thou fall into the fault of ingratitude, and be shut out of the Kingdom of Heaven, (as those were, who are mentioned in the Gospel to have been bidden to the

wedding dinner,) if thou absent thyself, thinking to excuse it.

This is the marriage-feast of the King of Heaven, the Banquet is Spiritual, Whose Bread doth strengthen man's heart, and Whose Wine doth inflame the soul with Heavenly joy; and the meat thereof is the flesh, of Christ, Who says, "My flesh is meat indeed." This is that healthful food of Angels sent down from Heaven, having in it all delight and savoury sweetness. This is that fat bread which giveth pleasures for a king. This is the most plentiful bread of good nourishment above all that the earth yieldeth. This is the bread of the offering of the first fruits. This is the bread signified as well in the cakes which Abraham did set before the angels, as also in the shew-bread; and this was likewise decyphered in the bread and wine which Melchizedek brought forth. Lastly, this is that bread baked upon the coals, in the strength whereof Elias did walk forty days and forty nights, unto Horeb, the mount of God. This is that tree of life, planted by Almighty God in the midst of the earthly paradise, whose fruit being eaten, would preserve bodily life. This is that Paschal Lamb without spot, by Whose blood stroken upon the two posts, and the door cheeks, the children of Israel were in times past delivered from the hand of the angel that smote the Egyptians. This is that kind which Manoah offered unto the

Lord upon a stone. This is also that honeycomb which Jonathan, dipping the tip of his rod therein, did put to his mouth, and his eyes were enlightened. This is also that large flowing stream of water, which suddenly issued out of the rock, after that Moses had stricken it with his rod.

Come freely, therefore, to this most sweet Banquet of Christ Jesus, wherein is promised unto thee most assured life and salvation. For if the garments of Christ, and if napkins and partlets brought from Paul did even with the least touch thereof give health, how much more then shall the very Body of Christ, being worthily received, deliver thee from all thine infirmities and wicked affection! If at Christ's only word Lazarus, having been four days in the grave, was raised up from the dead, how much more shall Christ's Body, being eaten of thee, give life unto thee, and purge thy conscience, quickening thee from the death of sin! Oh therefore, faithful soul, if thou be unclean, come to the fountain of purity; if thou be hungry, come and feed of the bread of life which fadeth not, and filleth the hungry soul with goodness. Art thou sick? this will be a most sovereign medicine for thine infirmity. Hast thou an issue whereof thou canst not be cured by the physicians? touch thou, in the full assurance of faith, (as did the woman in the Gospel, sick of the flux of blood,) the hem of Christ's garment, even the most blessed

Sacrament, and thine issue shall be stayed. If thou feel thyself to be stung by the serpents of perverse temptations, look upon that brazen serpent in which there was no poison, even Christ hanging upon the Cross. Dost thou make thy moan that thou art blind, weak, and lame? thou must then remember, that such are bidden to the supper of the great King, and are compelled to go in. But thou wilt say, I am wavering, alas! and inconstant; yea, but this Bread doth strengthen the heart of man. Art thou sorrowful and in perplexity? this Wine doth make joyful the inward man. Do many things trouble thee? cleave fast to Him Who calmed the waves of the sea when they were troubled. Goest thou astray from thy Lord and Master? yet mayest thou walk in the strength of this meat, even to the Mount of God.

These wonderful things doth the Holy Ghost in the Scriptures, and the Holy Ones of God, being inspired by the Holy Ghost, speak of this admirable Sacrament, whereof St. Cyprian in his Sermon of the Lord's Supper, most learnedly and religiously writeth: This unleavened bread which is the true and sincere meat, doth by the Sacrament sanctify us, by the receiving of it, it doth enlighten us with faith, and confirmeth us with truth towards Christ. Therefore, let all those who love the Lord's Passion come unto this most wholesome Bread, and let them not fear to eat of this most

sweet Manna so often as they can, whereby they may be made able to pass through the wilderness of this world without danger of their life. Let him not fear to eat of this healthful bread, whosoever desireth to have his heart made strong in the Lord, that he may overcome all those most wicked enemies, the devils, which daily lie in wait to hinder our salvation. Let no man make doubt, so often as possibly he can, to eat this most sweet, delightful, comfortable Bread, which was made in the womb of the Virgin, and baked upon the Altar of the Cross, in the strength whereof we shall be made able, in forty days and forty nights, (that is to say, in the short time of this transitory life,) to walk not only to Mount Horeb, which signifieth a desert, but even to Mount Tabor, which is the brightness and glory of God.

## CHAPTER LXVII.

OF THE SPIRITUAL HUNGER WE HAVE OR OUGHT TO HAVE, OFTEN TO COMMUNICATE; AND INDUCEMENTS UNTO THE SAME.

CONSIDERING our great necessity.

2. The great profit that doth hereby come unto us.

3. The admirable satiety it yieldeth unto the distressed soul.

4. For that it inciteth to the study of piety.

5. For that it enlightenth the understanding.

6. For that it addeth strength to our weakness.

7. For that it maketh glad the conscience.

8. For that it is our *viaticum*, our refreshing towards the end of our journey.

FOR THE AFFECTING OF THE CONSCIENCE, THREE THINGS ARE PRINCIPALLY TO BE THOUGHT UPON IN THE VERY TIME OF COMMUNICATING.

1. The eternal love wherewith God the Father loved us when as yet we were not, and provided all things necessary for us.

2. The inestimable love of God the Son, who gave Himself for us.

3. The unsearchable love of God the Holy Ghost, that every moment doth preserve us.

CHRISTIAN CONSIDERATIONS TO BE THOUGHT UPON BY EVERY ONE OF US, BOTH BEFORE AND AFTER THE HOLY COMMUNION.

*Before.*

1. That we call to mind, that as Almighty God appeared to Moses in the burning bush, so doth He also to them whose hearts are inflamed with the love of Him.

2. That if in the law so many purifications were used, then, in purifying our hearts under grace, much more is required.

3. That if Solomon took such care to build a temple for the ark of the Lord, what care ought there to be for the Lord, Himself the ark?

4. That the four questions proposed unto Jonah,* —the first *quod opus tuum?* "what is thy work or trade?" the second, *quæ terra tua?* "what is thy country?" the third, *quo vadis?* "whither goest thou?" the fourth, *quis populus tuus?* "what is thy people, or with whom livest thou?" —that these questions, I say, proposed to Jonah, every devout Communicant ought to propose unto himself, as thus:—

* Jonah i. 8.

What is thy work? to do the will of God, or thine own will? What makest thou thy country? Heaven or earth? Whither goest thou? after God, or after the world? What is thy people? with whom conversest thou? are they good or evil men?

*After.*

1. To be careful not to receive the grace of God in vain.*

2. To resign or consecrate the rest of our life to serve God, according to that rule of the Apostle, "As you have yielded your members servants of unrighteousness unto sin, even so now yield your members servants unto righteousness."†

3. That thou weigh with thyself the reasons why thy life is to be dedicated unto God, of Whom thou hast received a life of nature, a life of grace, and an assured hope of a life of glory in the world to come.

* 2 Corinthians vi. 1. † Romans vi. 19

## CHAPTER LXVIII.

DEVOUT CONSIDERATIONS TO BE USED AFTER THE RECEIVING OF THE HOLY SACRAMENT.

CONSIDER with what honour thou art prosecuted by receiving this Holy Pledge, in regard whereof all earthly honours are to be contemned.

2. Consider, whilst thou dost Communicate, thou art become a Temple of the Holy Ghost, and that if Solomon so much rejoiced when he saw the building of the temple finished, which was but a material temple, hast thou not cause much more to rejoice in this Temple which is Spiritual? In this temple thou oughtest often to praise God, and, casting out evil thoughts, say, This my soul is now become a house of prayer.

3. Consider, that thou by often receiving dost become a living sepulchre of Christ: think if thou hadst been present when He was taken down from the Cross, and believing He was thy Saviour, surely thou wouldest have been glad to receive His blessed Body into thine house.

MEDITATIONS ACCOMMODATED TO THE SEVERAL PARTS AND PETITIONS CONTAINED IN THE LORD'S PRAYER, WHICH PRAYER IS WONT TO BE PRAYED AFTER OUR RECEIVING.

*Our Father.*

O my Father, what wilt thou? I ask of Thee, being an evil son. Behold, I ask of Thee the Spirit of Thy Son, that, without servile fear, and with much confidence, I may receive Thee, to the unspeakable comfort of my soul.

*Which art in Heaven.*

Lord, give me a taste of that felicity which all Thy saints enjoy with Thee in Heaven, that from henceforth I savour not earthly things, but Heavenly or things on high.

*Hallowed be Thy name.*

Give me grace, that for this benefit I may give Thee laud and praise, and sanctify Thy name. Grant that in all my actions, I may seek, not mine own, but Thy glory.

*Thy kingdom come.*

Evermore reign in my heart, which I do offer unto Thee for a gift; let not sin, let not the flesh, let not the dominion of Satan, rule there, but Thy grace only.

*Thy will be done in Earth, as it is in Heaven.*

Teach me to do Thy will, readily, willingly, joyfully, as Thy Saints do the same will of Thine in Heaven.

*Give us this day our daily bread.*

I beseech thee, O Lord, to me grant an ardent desire towards this Holy Sacrament, the true bread of Angels.

*Forgive us our trespasses, as we forgive them that trespass against us.*

Give me remission of all my sins past, a hatred of the same, and a readiness for the love of Thee for the time to come.

*And lead us not into temptation.*

Give me grace to withstand the temptations of my ghostly enemy, and both in adversity and prosperity evermore keep constancy of mind, that mine enemies prevail not against me.

*But deliver us from evil.*

Deliver us from all our sins, that we may be presented unto Thee, and unto Thy service.

*For thine is the kingdom, the power, and the glory, for ever and ever. Amen.*

Thou, O Lord, art worthy to receive honour, and praise, and dominion for evermore.*

## OF THE VIGILANT CARE THAT A CHRISTIAN OUGHT TO HAVE OF NOT FALLING AWAY FROM A GOOD AND GODLY COURSE OF LIFE.

Concerning the sin of relapsing or falling away from a good and Godly course of life, we are first to consider, that he who doth truly repent doth so bewail his evils passed, that he doth fully purpose not to commit them again; and that a vain repentance is that, saith St. Augustine, which the same fault following doth defile. The lamentations for former sins are not effectual, if the same sins are iterated. Wilt thou be a true penitent? then cease from sin; take heed thou say not, I cannot abstain from sin: "God is faithful, Who will not suffer us to be tempted above that we are able."† *Non posse pretenditur, non velle in causa est*, "We are not able to resist sin is pretended, we are not willing is the cause." So saith St. Augustine.

Secondly, we are to consider that the sum and complement of all virtue doth consist in persever-

* Revelations iv. 11. † 1 Corinthians x. 13.

ance; not he that runneth, but he that runneth unto the end, attaineth the prize.*

Thirdly, let us call to mind by Whose instinct and motion we began this good work, and that the end thereof was to serve Him.

Fourthly, who it is that would have us leave it off, to wit, the professed enemy of our souls.

Fifthly, that evil men do often persevere in evil, how much more should we persevere in good!

Sixthly, that for want of perseverance, an Angel lost Heaven, Adam lost paradise.

Seventhly, or last of all, by perseverance we come to Blessedness. "Blessed is he that continueth to the end, he shall be saved."†

### A PRAYER TO OBTAIN PERSEVERANCE.

O Lord Jesus Christ, our most persevcrant love, Thou who always lovest Thine unto the end, Thou hanging upon the Cross didst say, "It is finished," thereby giving us a most excellent example of perseverance, make us, O Lord, in the service we have undertaken to serve Thee, that we may say with Thine Apostle, "We have kept the Faith;" and with holy Job, "We will not depart from innocency whilst we live;" and with David, "Thou, O Lord, hast kept us from our youth up, forsake us not in our age," but, good Lord, continue with us unto the end, and at the end. Amen.

* 1 Corinthians ix. 24. † Matthew xxiv. 13.

## CHAPTER LXIX.

UNTO A FRUITFUL RECEIVING THE HOLY SACRAMENT, THREE THINGS ARE REQUIRED.

### 1. *Purity of Mind.*

1. That thou be sorry for sins past, and intend to abstain from such and such sins hereafter.

2. That thou lay aside all hatred, for it is a Sacrament of love.

3. That thou remember Who hath said it, "Be ye holy, as I am holy."*

### 2. *A right intention that thou communicate.*

1. Not of custom only.
2. Not to please men.
3. Not to appear outwardly Holy.

### 3. *Actual devotion.*

1. That thou endeavour to pray unto God without distraction.

2. That thou be spiritually affected towards Christ's Holy Institution.

* Leviticus xix. 2.

3. That thou come with all humility and devout reverence.

*After receiving the Holy Communion.*

1. Give thanks to Christ, that He hath vouchsafed to come under thy roof.

2. Be careful more and more to worship Him.

3. Beseech Him never to depart from thee, pray Him to continue with thee always, even unto the end. So be it.

## CHAPTER LXX.

AN ADMONITION TO THE GODLY READER CONCERNING THE CONTROVERSY ABOUT THE HOLY EUCHARIST, AGAINST SUNDRY REASONS OF CARDINAL BELLARMINE.

WHEREAS every question, in a case of faith, Godly and devout reader, ought to stand forth at the tribunal of Holy writ, and there to be judged; let it not seem strange unto any, if as once St. Paul appealed unto Cæsar, so we by a course allowable in law, do (evermore due respect had unto the authority of the ancient Fathers) in the first place, and that by good right, make our appeals in cases of controversy unto the Holy Scriptures. For why? In these we not only find the truth safe and sound, notwithstanding all the devices of evil men endeavouring to corrupt the same, yet ever the same, and so confirmed by the consent of the Church, but also the means of seeking out the same truth; which, if we follow as the best guide, we cannot slip, err, or be deceived.

2. Now the means of seeking out the truth may seem by that of the Prophet Jeremiah, or by Him in Whom the prophet spake, to be thus laid forth: "Ask or inquire for the old way, it is the good way; walk in it."* Our Lord and Saviour in the Gospel, in His reply to the Pharisees tempting Him, Why did Moses give them a bill of divorce? answereth, "Moses did it for the hardness of your hearts, but from the beginning it was not so."†—Whence it appeareth, that by the old way we come unto the good way, by observing the first institution we find out the true institution; all that are in doubt, all that err, may by this means more easily come to attain and enjoy the same. When Almighty God promised unto the people of Israel, by the before-named Moses, a form of framing the tabernacle and the appurtenances thereof, "Look," saith He unto them, "that thou make it after the fashion that was shewed thee in the mountain."‡ The Prophet Isaiah, to withdraw the people from their diviners and soothsayers, cries out, "To the law and the testimony."‖ When Christ casteth buyers and sellers out of the temple,◊ He citeth the Prophet Jeremiah, "My house is the house of prayer, but you have made it a den of thieves."¶ The Apostle St. Paul, setting down unto them the true manner of celebrating the Lord's Supper,

* Jeremiah vi. 16. † Matthew xix. 7, 8. ‡ Exodus xxv. 40.
‖ Isaiah viii. 20. ◊ Luke xix. 45. ¶ Jeremiah vii 11.

saith, "For I have received of the Lord that which also I have delivered unto you."* If at any time the Fathers were in doubt concerning points appertaining to faith, by and by they repaired to the oracle of the Scripture; so St. Ambrose, "Let the Scripture be asked;" so St. Augustine, "Let us ask St. Peter and St. Paul."

By this we see the means of seeking out the the truth; which is, how that the Fathers look back to the Apostles, the Apostles to Christ, Christ to the Prophets, the Prophets to the Law, the Law to the first pattern upon the mount.

3. Now of long time, yea, too, too long, O Holy Christ, have we Christians contended about Thy Holy Institution; from the Fathers to Thy Apostles; yea, O blessed Saviour, we come with all reverence, and let us come hand in hand, to consider the first pattern instituted by Thyself.†—And here first, let the devout Christian call to mind, that He that said of the wine, "This is My Blood," and of the bread, "This is My Body," said also of St. John the Baptist, "This is that Elias," and of Himself, "I am the door," "the true vine," &c. These—"Receive my covenant in your flesh;" "By Baptism we are buried with Him;" "Being many, we are one bread, one body;"—are usual phrases in Holy writ.

4. Again, what more meet, than in a spiritual food

* 1 Cor. xi. 23. † Matt. xxvi. 17. Mark xiv. 12. Luke xxii. 11.

to admit a spiritual sense? "We did all eat of the same spiritual meat," saith the Apostle.* Was it not given after supper, and in small quantity? It is the Spirit that giveth life. I go forward, but by the way, this pious consideration, gathered out of the words of Christ our Saviour, concerning His own institution, doth easily show that to be the nourishment of our souls which is delivered in the Lord's Supper, and doth withal manifest the great excellency thereof.

From the words of Christ, I come unto the Apostle St. Paul, a good interpreter of the same words, one who wanted not care of stirring up the Corinthians to reverence and devotion about this Mystery. Now, what saith the Apostle? He commands no adoration; he speaks not a word of transubstantiation; but only showeth the dignity thereof, in showing both the author and the end.

5. Let us proceed to the orthodox Fathers, that it may appear, Reverend Sir, that we neither, upon a desire of contradiction, nor upon hatred to any, do embrace an opinion newly broached; but look, what we think, believe, and confess, in this main point of Christian Doctrine, the same also the ancient Church hath thought, believed, and, with one consent, taught. And herein we take no little comfort, that although our faith doth principally rest on the word of God, rightly understood, yet it can-

* 1 Corinthians x. 3.

not choose but yield us joy, with the orthodox Fathers, holding rightly, we hold also that which is right. We acknowledge that of Dionysius, the Areopagite, (neither do I see why we should fear in this case either the author or the authority,) in that, in his Divine hierarchy, he calleth the Eucharist a most Divine Sacrament; that of Justin Martyr, where he saith, "We receive not those elements as common bread nor common drink;" that of Tertullian against the Marcionites, "The bread which he took and distributed Christ made His Body;" that of Origen, upon divers places of the Gospel, "When thou eatest and drinkest the Body and Blood of the Lord, the Lord entereth under thy roof;" that of St. Cyprian, "As in the person of Christ the humanity appeared, but the divinity was hid; so in the visible Sacrament a Divine essence communicates itself unto us;" that of Hilary, speaking of the Trinity, "Of the verity of the Body and Blood of Christ there is left no place of doubt:" that of St. Ambrose, *de mysteriis initiandis*, "We have more excellent food in the Eucharist than the Jews had in the manna;" that of St. Jerome, in his Epistle to Hedebia, "Here the Lord Jesus (meaning in the Sacrament) is both the Maker of the feast and the Food;" last of all, instead of many, that of St. Augustine, "O with what purity of mind, with what chastity of body,

is that sacrifice to be celebrated, where Thou, O Lord, art both the Priest and the Sacrifice !"

7. But to break off the mentioning of the Fathers, lest in multiplying their names we might seem ambitious, we hear them all, as it is meet, speaking with great reverence of so great a Mystery: but for disputing or reasoning about transubstantiation, we hear not a word. Let their writings be read over, and read over again, and we shall find that they admit of a change, but what a one? of the substance ? nothing less ; for it remains the same : of the use ? it is right, for sure in the Lord's Supper it is Heavenly and Divine.

8. Whereas, oftentimes in the Fathers, we meet with the words, " nature," " substance," applying them to the efficacy of the Sacrament, we are to understand that by these words they intended, first, to draw the people from the outward signs to the substance, and next, to kindle in their affections both reverence and love.

9. Antiquity, therefore, is silent in the plea or the defence of transubstantiation. Sure, yea most sure, it is, that the figurative speeches of the ancient Fathers do no way patronize this paradox. The sobriety of the same Fathers, let us, their posterity, praise and imitate.

10. And now that we may ingeniously confess that which is a plain case in the sight of God, and not flourish over the truth, with colours of rhetoric,

or smother it with the clouds of deceit, we acknowledge that the dignity of this Sacrament is greater than words can express, yea, than the mind of man is able to conceive. If any will exact the efficacy of those five words, "For this is My Body," we answer, it is a great Mystery.

11. Truly we give, and that justly, great respect and reverence to the Holy Eucharist; for whereas bread and wine are elements naturally ordained for the sustenance of the body, by the power of Divine Benediction, they do receive a virtue that, being received of the faithful, they become nourishment of the soul, nay, they become means whereby we are sanctified both in body and soul, and are made the members of Christ.

12. But Christ, some say, in express words calleth the bread His Body, and the wine His Blood: true, in express words also He calleth Himself a Rock. Right well saith Eusebius Emisenus, "Comest thou to the Sacrament, consider there the Body and Blood of Christ: wonder at it with reverence, touch it with thy mind, receive it with the hand of thy heart; do not say as the Capernaites, "Master, how camest thou hither!" but, with the disciples, asking no question, be glad thou dost enjoy Him. He is honoured in this Mystery, that was once offered upon the Cross. Yea, but how can this be, that Christ, sitting at the right hand of God in Heaven, should dispose of His

Body to us poor inhabitants of earth? Take here the answer of the Angel Gabriel, the Holy Ghost hath overshadowed it. "From hence," saith St. Bernard, "to search is temerity, to know is life eternal."

13. Is it not a hard saying, "Unless ye eat the Flesh of the Son of God," &c.? It is a hard saying to them that are hard of believing. The disciples hearing that of their Lord and Master, "Take, eat, this is My Body," they take, they eat, asking no question. "Being confirmed in faith," saith St. Chrysostom, "they take and eat; unbelievers hearing the same of our Saviour, they depart, they eat not." Peter answereth, "Lord, Thou hast the words of life;" others go backward, leaving the Lord of life. The Capernaite, hearing, dreameth of eating naturally, grossly; the Godly are assured of eating Spiritually, and yet withal really.

14. Great was the authority of Pythagoras amongst his scholars; if he said it, they were silent; but greater was, and is, and ought to be, the authority of Christ with believers; He saith it, and they believe. The sun remains a splendent body, though bats and owls cannot endure it; the Holy Sacrament remains an unspeakable Mystery, though the carnal man doth not perceive it. In this case, silence is the safest eloquence, and the best expressing is not to express. A Godly med-

itation is safer than a Socratical disputing. Discourse of controversy doth often abate devotion: discourse of piety about this Mystery is sweeter than the honey or the honey-comb.

15. The Passover, which Christ kept with His Disciples, was prepared in an upper room. When men brought unto Him a man sick of the palsy, they, in letting down the sick, uncovered the roof of the house. The harder parts of the Paschal Lamb were consumed by fire. Mysteries are, if not contrary, yet often above reason. Well saith St. Cyril, in his third book against Julian, "If human reason waver in things sensible, how much more shall it do so in things beyond sense? Faithless Julian, what if the creation of the Angels excel human capacity, did not Moses well in forbearing to mention it? Assuredly he did well. What if it cannot by reason be conceived how Christ, sitting at the table, should give Himself to His, for sustenance, wilt thou, therefore, by and by, imagine this or that change?"

Let us rather honour Christ in His Mysteries, praise Him for His mercies, be thankful unto Him for His benefits. Those things which we comprehend, let us admire; those which we cannot comprehend, let us more admire: though words be wanting what to express, let not faith be wanting what to believe.

16. When all is done, the devout estimation of

the ancient Fathers, concerning this Holy Sacrament, is not lightly or loosely to be passed over, whose example for piety let us set before the eyes of our mind.

17. Notwithstanding, we look not so much in this case what the Fathers, who were no babes, for the first six hundred years, have determined, as what Christ saith, who is before all. But be it, let antiquity prevail, which way soever men turn them for these curious and needless disputes, sure they were not from the beginning.

18. And now a little to take a survey of the beginning and progress of the doctrine of transubstantiation, when now the envious man watched to sow his tares amongst the wheat, which is of grains the chiefest; to corrupt gold, which is of metals the purest; to draw away the minds of men from the pledges of their salvation, amongst which the Holy Eucharist is not the least; this He did not so much by opposition, as by subtle guile, stirring up curious fancies to seek and search out reasons of the secret counsel of God, and to say with them in the Gospel, "Master, how camest Thou hither?"*

19. One Berengarius, in the year 1028, was the first that came upon the stage to act this tragedy, by him were kindled such sparks as after brake out into great and fearful flames. The matter is toss-

* 1 John vi. 25.

ed to and fro in the time of Nicholas, the second Bishop of Rome. In the year 1040 Berengarius abjured his former assertions; were his latter thoughts the wiser? This I stand not to discuss, dispute it he that will.

20. The Church in the meanwhile, who ought to have followed the counsel of St. Paul to Timothy, in suppressing questions that cause strife, did clean contrary in adding more and more daily a multitude of questions, so long that those sparks kindled by Berengarius began to increase, and set all, as it were, into a most hideous combustion.

21. An assembly of religious men came together in the council of Lateran; in this rueful state of things what is done by the council? Doth it appease debates? No. Doth it call back this Holy institution of Christ to the ancient practice? It endeavoured nothing less; only it promulgates a new and unheard-of doctrine of transubstantiation: and why might not the council establish the word transubstantiation as well as the first council of Nice did the word ὁμοούσιος, the first council of Ephesus the word θεοτόκος, which both were established by councils, and after received by the Christian world? There was neither the same authority to decree, nor the necessity of doctrine to be decreed, in this, as was in the two beforenamed councils: what did not time decay? *ætas parentum, etc.*

22. After this the question comes to be handled by the master of the sentences, whom the school divines do follow; is the controversy appeased? Disputed it is to and fro by many subtleties; here the multitude of questions is able to confound the reader, and the divers turnings and windings able to bring the happiest wit into a labyrinth. At one time the doubt is about the power of God, at another about His will; now, of the existing of substance with accidents, then, of accidents without a substance, sometimes of annihilating of former natures, sometimes of trans-elementing the same. In this chaos there is nothing found certain, save that uncertain dream of transubstantiation.

23. Whether or no this were pleasing to that Blessed Spirit, who willeth us to be wise unto sobriety, let all men judge.

24. The Bethshemites* were happy in enjoying the presence of the ark of God; but falling to be curious by prying into it, they suffered just punishment for their curiosity. The Church of Rome was happy while it enjoyed the presence of this Holy Mystery, had she known her own happiness, when, for a thousand years together, there was never heard of the name of "ubiquity," "sacramentary," or the like; no division of the East against the West Church, or of the West against the East; all agreed about the truth of this Holy

* 1 Samuel vi. 19.

Mystery; but when once men would press into depths inaccessible, rend away the veil, and intrude themselves into the Holy of Holies, good Lord, with what a spirit of giddiness were they whirled to and fro, as he of whom the comical poet maketh mention, which way to betake him he knew not. This it is to run into needless mazes.

25. To get credit to this new found doctrine before mentioned, miracles are reported; but what ones, I pray you? Not those of St. Cyprian, or Nazianzene, or Optatus Meluitanus, or even of Surius himself, which were to set forth the dignity of this Sacrament. This had been tolerable, and not mentioned of the Fathers without cause. But miracles, I say, are reported, or rather indeed feigned, to confirm men, yea, to seduce men, were they over credulous, by this means, in this doctrine of transubstantiation, which was no way allowable; for God stands not in need of these.

26. To conclude the whole proceedings and tumultuous differences raised concerning the question of the Holy Eucharist, in brief, let this suffice; men observing no mean, about the mean and manner of Christ's Presence in the Sacrament, that they have done much hurt by their boldness and curiosity, it appears more clearly than noon light.

27. In this mean space all things now tossed and turmoiled, there arise, upon the contrary part, a kind of men prone and apt, not so much to the

alteration, as indeed to the utter ruinating of things; into which kind of men it were to be wished that the commonwealth, yea, the Church of Christ, had never fallen; men that have not any thing of true religion, but only a bare outward show; men that are wont to account it great piety to censure others, to be impious, these are those that, under a pretence of avoiding superstition, will observe in a manner no pious duties of true religion, and, especially in celebrating the Lord's Supper after a rude and unmannerly manner, they neglect all devotion. Is the Communion celebrated well? A badge it is of our profession, a familiar assembly of guests, a remembrance of somewhat passed: Take ye, eat ye, stand ye, there is no other gesture required than what is used at public meetings; what need any mention of the Body of Christ, which was broken and given for us, of the Blood of Christ, which was shed for us? Take ye, eat ye, drink ye;—O blessed Paul, if thou didst live, thou wouldest tell these men, they ought, upon fear of judgment, to discern the Lord's Body.

28. Was there a punishment inflicted upon him that would make the Law of Moses of none effect, and shall he go without punishment that would make this Divine Institution of the Son of God of none effect? The irreligious opinion of these men, with whom nothing is true but in opinions, whom nothing can please but their own fantasies,

with whom nothing is sound but in show, the assertions, yea, the worst of these men's assertions, our adversaries of the Church of Rome do often, but unjustly, term our axioms, or principal points of our religion. Whatsoever any bold spirited man, whatsoever any unlearned, whatsoever any less godly, shall set abroach, either against faith or good manners, appertaining to the Holy Sacrament, we straight are censured and condemned, without all Christian charity, of heresy, and as the authors and defenders of such impieties.

29. Wherefore, they are in this case to be requested, that at least they would see and consider our reverent respect had towards this Holy Mystery, agreeable to antiquity. We do confess, with all good conscience, that the worthiness of this Sacrament is greater than either the force of any man's wit, or copiousness of his eloquence, is able to express or conceive.

30. And here we cannot but marvel, and desire to marvel, that Cardinal Bellarmine doth so lightly pass over the words of Calvin, mentioned by him, as it were by chance; "I am not ashamed," saith the same Calvin, "to acknowledge mine ignorance in this Mystery."

31. Well saith Fulgentius, against the Arians, "True faith hath never superfluous, but it ever had and hath, just reasons." So also St. Cyril's

mysteries are offered to believers, not to questioners.

32. Albeit, then the manner be not of us over curiously inquired or searched after, yet the same Presence of Christ is acknowledged which Christ Himself would have to be acknowledged. We say with St. Ambrose, that there is not taken from bread the substance thereof, but that there is adjoined the grace of Christ's Body after a manner ineffable.

33. It was no other but a shadow of this benefit that was of old given to the Jews in the ark of the covenant, and yet Solomon did so admire it, as that he said, "And is it incredible that God should dwell with men?"*

34. We often marvel and condemn the Jews, that, having Christ amongst them, they did not acknowledge and receive Him in that manner they ought to have done. Let us consider Christ among us, and invert that saying of the husbandmen, "This is the Heir," let us take Him, receive Him, believe in Him, "and the Inheritance shall be ours."

35. Last of all, concerning the controversy about the Holy Eucharist, between two extremes, whereof we have heard, let us embrace the means, let us, with a sincere faith, apprehend the truth,

* 1 Kings viii. 27.

apprehending, let us keep it, keeping, let us adore it with godly manners.

36. And now to draw in, as it were, the sails of this admonition, godly reader, seeing that this Divine Institution was left by our gracious Redeemer, both for the inward peace of the soul, and outward of the Church, who can sufficiently lament to see the dissention that hath miserably divided the Christian world, and discord that hath arisen about the same! Let us call to mind, that God is not the God of dissention, but the God of peace. Let us all forbear on both sides needless and unprofitable disputes. Unless Thou, Lord, hadst said it,—"This is My Body, This is My Blood," who would have believed it? Unless Thou hadst said, O Holy Christ, "Take, eat, drink ye all of this," who durst have touched it? Who would have approached to so Heavenly a repast, hadst Thou not commanded it, *hoc facite*, "do ye this;" but Thou commanding, who would not joyfully come and Communicate?

37. Then let us hold captive human reason, and prepare ourselves unto the fruit of this Heavenly Manna. Unnecessary disputes bring small profits, we may with greater benefit wonder than argue. Then are the works of God most truly conceived, when they are devoutly admired.

## THE PERORATION, OR SUMMING UP BY PRAYER THE ADMONITION ABOUT THE CONTROVERSY.

1. God, of His mercy grant, that this excellent league of love and charity, left by the Saviour of the world to His Church, and commended unto us by the love of Him Who loved us, God grant, I say, that, all contentions laid asleep, we may on all parts accord about this league of love, and let men and Angels say, Amen.

2. Great differences, acute disputes, have long since been had; in the mean space, merciful Lord, what barrenness of piety is there found? Many are become weary with striving, some even with looking on and beholding them that strive, a third sort in hearing and reading distractions on divers parts; most, which is to be lamented, are slow and frozen in piety.

3. The question about the Sacrament hath now many years been controversed in the Church.—The authors of sects and heresies, as the Anabaptists, and Arians, and such like, they are neither orthodox all, nor of this house with us; but this unnatural strife is domestic, which God cease.

4. Now whereas we see no end of contending, and small hope in regard of men, of ever seeing an end to contention, let us jointly beseech our Heavenly Father, that in seeking peace we may go

one before another, that all being careful to attain Christian unity, and careful of our own salvation, we may glorify our Father in Heaven.

5. Let the last necessity find us ready, which will surprise them that are unready. Let our uncertain end strike into us a certain foresight of our end, which, according to the Wise Man, we should remember, and let enmity pass. Future blessedness, attained it may be; for the excellency thereof, rightly conceived, it cannot be. In seeking so great a good, the best mean is to observe no mean.

6. To draw to an end, although in regard of the continuance of the before-named blessedness there be no end, let us every one dispose himself unto that day which doth assign to every one his eternal mansion, where there shall be no more night, where there shall need no light of the candle, nay of the sun, where the "Lamb is the light"* in that blessed vision of the Lord Jesus; unto which let us, according to the counsel of the Holy Ghost, proceed by one rule, "Glory to God in the highest, on earth peace, and towards man good-will."†

* Revelation xxi. 23. † Luke ii. 14.

## CHAPTER LXXI.

GODLY MEDITATIONS UPON THE PASSION OF OUR LORD AND SAVIOUR JESUS CHRIST; NECESSARY TO BE USED BEFORE AND AFTER THE HOLY COMMUNION.

AS there is no one thing that more appertaineth unto our salvation than the Passion of Christ our Redeemer, nor any benefit for which we ought more to give thanks, so there is no subject more worthy of our best and best disposed meditations to speak of, to confer of, to remember, to meditate of, more consolatory than is the subject of our Saviour Christ's Blessed Passion.

Again, we ought more to give thanks to God for our redemption than for our creation, for these causes:—

The first is, if man be obliged or bound to God, for that of nothing, by His very word he was created; now by sin to be made less than nothing, and then to be remade, is much more.

The second is, for that God shewed more love

by redeeming man than by creating him; for, before he was created, man did nothing whereby he deserved to be created, but after he was created he sinned, and deserved that his first being should be destroyed; wherefore, far greater was the benignity and mercy of God in redeeming man than in creating him.

The third is, that the benefit of creation had not profited man, without the benefit of his redemption.

The fourth is, that in the creation God gave man Himself; but in the redemption God gave Himself for man.

The fifth is, that it was a great thing that we were His work, but a greater is it in that we are His price.

Wherefore the devout Christian ought often by contemplation to look up to Christ crucified, especially having a remorse for his sins, as the people did in the wilderness look up to the serpent that was lifted up, when they were stung by serpents.

### THE FRUITS OF THIS MEDITATION.

The first is, to receive curing and comfort, "In all my afflictions," saith St. Augustin, "I find not any more effectual remedy than the wounds of Christ, in which I securely sleep." "Nay, this meditation doth make afflictions sweet," saith St. Gregory, "as the wood did that sweetened the bitter waters."

The second is, it incites to all virtues, and is a remedy against all vices; it incites to humility, patience, prayer, and such like; it averts the mind from all vices, *Quando occurrit turpis cogitatio, fugio ad vulnera Christi*, saith St. Bernard; nay, *quando dæmon insidiatur, fugio ad vulnera Christi, et fugit a me tentator.* When any evil thought assaults me, I fly to the wounds of Christ; when the tempter doth assault, I fly to these wounds of Christ and the tempter flies from me.

The third is, it stirreth men up to praise God, as the people did when they were delivered in the Red sea; if we have any thankfulness this should move us to thankfulness.

## A COLLOQUY OF THE SOUL WITH CHRIST TOUCHING THE PASSION.

*Soul.*—Lord, wherefore didst Thou suffer Thyself to be sold?

*Christ.*—That I might deliver thee from servitude.

Lord, why didst thou pray so much?
That I might appease God's wrath against thee.
Lord, why didst Thou suffer fear and trembling?
That I might make thee secure, and of good courage.
Lord, why were deceits intended against Thee?
To deliver thee from deceits.

Wherefore didst thou sweat blood?
To wash away the spots of thy sin.
Why wouldest Thou be taken?
That thou mightest not be taken of thy ghostly enemies.
Why wouldest Thou be bound?
To loose the bands of thy sins.
Why wert Thou denied of Peter?
To confess thee before My Father.
Why wouldest Thou be forsaken of the disciples?
That I might be with thee until the day of judgment.
Why wouldest Thou be accused?
To absolve thee?
Why wouldest Thou be spitted upon?
To wipe away thy foulness.
Why wouldest Thou be whipped?
That thou mightest be free from stripes.
Why wouldest Thou be lifted up upon the Cross?
That thou mightest be lifted up to Heaven.
Why wouldest Thou be crowned with thorns?
To crown thee with glory.
Why were thy arms stretched out?
To embrace thee, O fainting soul.
Why was Thy side opened?
To receive thee in.
Why didst Thou die amidst two thieves?
That thou mightest live in the midst of Angels.

## CHAPTER LXXII.

### OF THE MANNER IN PARTICULAR HOW TO MEDITATE OF THE PASSION.

LET the devout Christian call to mind how Christ our blessed Saviour suffered in every part of His body; how His head was crowned with thorns, His eyes covered with tears, His face full of spittings, His mouth full of gall, His ears full of contumelies, His shoulders full of lashes; how He had His hands pierced, His side opened, His feet fastened unto the cross, His whole body strained and stretched out.

After this, let the devout Christian meditate of His Saviour's agony in the garden, for the sins of the world; of His sweat in a cold night, when His prayers went up, and the drops of blood ran down; of His hanging upon the Cross, when He seemed as it were forsaken of His friends on earth and His Father in Heaven; of the bending down His head and giving up the ghost, with these words, "Father, into Thy hands I commend My Spirit."

Here let the devout Christian stand amazed at

the height, and depth, and length, and breadth, of the love of Christ.

Last of all, let him consider what good effects this meditation ought to work in him, to wit, of humility, patience, love, duty, reverence, and thankfulness, to his Redeemer. Who would not be humble, calling to mind that the Son of God humbled Himself unto the death of the Cross? Who would not be patient, considering His patience, who, as a meek Lamb, opened not His mouth before the shearer? Who would not love Him, who laid down His life for us miserable sinners?

### CERTAIN BRIEF PETITIONS TO FOLLOW THE FORMER MEDITATIONS.

Son of God, Redemer of the world,
Have mercy upon us.
By Thy tender love to man,
Have mercy upon us.
By the institution of Thy last Supper, before Thy suffering,
Have mercy upon us.
By Thine agony in the garden,
Have mercy upon us.
By Thy hard beating and scourging,
Have mercy upon us.
By Thy crowning with thorns,
Have mercy upon us.

By Thy bearing of Thy Cross, when Thou wentest to death,
Have mercy upon us.
By the piercing of Thy hands and feet,
Have mercy upon us.
By the lifting up of Thy most Holy Body upon the Cross,
Have mercy upon us.
By the love Thou hadst, hanging three hours on the Cross alive,
Have mercy upon us.
By the holy tears shed upon the Cross,
Have mercy upon us,
By Thy thirst, and receiving gall,
Have mercy upon us.
By inclining Thy head upon the Cross,
Have mercy upon us.
By Thy giving up the ghost,
Have mercy upon us.
By all the labour and weariness, sorrow and heaviness, that Thou sufferedst from the day of Thy nativity unto the hour of the departure of Thy soul from Thy body,
Have mercy upon us.
By Thy glorious and powerful resurrection,
Have mercy upon us.
By Thy marvellous ascension up into Heaven,
Have mercy upon us.

By Thy Divine consolation, and sending down of the Holy Ghost upon Thine Apostles, comfort us Lord, evermore, by the same Holy Ghost, and

Have mercy upon us.

## CHAPTER LXXIII.

GODLY MEDITATIONS UPON THE DIVINE PRESENCE; TO STIR US UP TO A CONTINUAL CARE OF WALKING IN THE WAYS OF GOD, AFTER OUR RECEIVING THE LORD'S SUPPER.

*How excellent and behoveful an exercise it is to place God as present in all our actions.*

VERY many excellent as also profitable means and exercises there are for the obtaining of virtue, amongst which, notwithstanding, there is none more behoveful or commodious than this whereof we are now about to treat, viz. the Divine Presence, if, as it ought, it be rightly applied; for whatsoever good resteth in any other, the same in some sort is comprised in this. In a spiritual life, whatever profit is reaped by other means, the same by this exercise may be obtained.

This one only, of setting God ever before us, doth move and encourage the servant of God to be truly careful in all his actions. It doth kindle in him a desire to use all other good practices, that the wholesome aids and necessary helps, for the purchasing of true and sound virtues, may be at

hand, that the Heavenly knowledge for the enlightening of our understanding, and spiritual strength for the putting forth of our will, may be daily granted of God. And thus that is verified which we said, namely, this exercise to be as it were the sum and recapitulation of all other. If, therefore, the servant of God, being desirous of spiritual proceeding, doth fear to be forgetful of so many healthful ways which he hath either heard of from religious men, or read in books, to be necessary for the attaining the perfection of a spiritual life, let him at least be mindful of this, and exercise it in this matter; for with this care he shall bring to pass that all other, which did seem to be utterly forgotten, shall, when need requires, be freshly recalled to mind. Again, if any one being desirous earnestly to please God, which all ought to be, and in all things to obey His Heavenly will, (after reading in godly books so many experiments and admonitions, the means to lead to a Godly and devout life,) be suppressed in mind, thinking it as it were impossible to make use of all these exercises, let him be of good courage, for behold, with one preservative all difficulty is taken away. To this one exercise, by God's assistance, he may seriously apply himself, and he may discern his heart so to be kindled with a Heavenly desire, and with the will of God so framed and conformed that all other means and remedies shall, by Divine

inspiration, presently come into his mind, as occasion shall serve, both for the embracing and exercising of any whatsoever virtues, and also for the banishing and vanquishing temptations however grievous. For truly God, Whom he doth behold present with him, and in Whom he doth heartily repose all his trust and confidence, and of Whom he doth earnestly desire succour, even He, in his good time and place, doth minister whatsoever is necessary in that exercise, and doth deliver unto him both knowledge and strength to use all means requisite for this purpose; for God doth never leave them destitute of the seasonable aid of His grace, who do, as is meet, lead their lives as in the sight and presence of his Divine Majesty.

## CHAPTER LXXIV.

HOW GREATLY THIS EXERCISE IS COMMENDED IN THE SCRIPTURES, AND HOW SPECIAL A CARE THE SERVANT OF GOD OUGHT TO PLACE THEREIN BEING DESIROUS TO PROCEED IN GODLINESS OF LIVING.

OF that which hath been spoken, the servant of God may easily collect, that even as there is need of care and diligence to be used in all exercises and godly means, that profitable virtues be obtained; so a far greater and more fervent study is required in this practice, namely, of the presence of God apprehended by the eyes of the understanding, or to be placed before the eyes of the mind; because this, amongst the residue, hath the pre-eminence; as one hath wisely exhorted, who saith, "Amongst all holy exercises, let this be cared for, and therein strain or stretch out all the faculties of thy soul, that continually, which is to say often, thou mayest lift up thy heart to God, and to the meditation and love of heavenly things. Wilt thou attain to purity of soul? always lift up thy heart to God. This only is the cause that so few

come to perfection, because they spend their time in exercises and means less profitable, and neglect the chiefest." "And," he addeth, "Labour thou to unite thy soul with God, and to have him fixed in thy memory. Advance thy desires and the whole affections of thy heart unto Him; and although a hundred times in one hour thou art distracted in mind, be not therefore dismayed, but always have recourse to thy purpose. Let the words of the holy and reverend Fathers move thee to frequent this exercise, who have exhorted us to the practice hereof with a general consent, as being instructed of one Master, namely, the Holy Ghost."

But this doctrine the holy Fathers have derived out of the fountains of the Scripture, wherein often and with gravity of words, this exercise is commended; and that we may the more truly understand the necessity and excellence hereof, and that it may the more deeply be impressed in our hearts with divers forms and manners of speech, wherein notwithstanding is but one and the selfsame meaning, the Holy Ghost doth inflame and stir us up to that exercise according as David saith, "Seek ye the Lord, and ye shall be confirmed: seek ye always His face." "By His *face*," saith St. Augustine, "there is meant His presence; and therefore always to seek the face of the Lord, is to be busied as in His presence, and to turn the desires and

love of our hearts to Him." And in another place he saith, "My eyes are always to the Lord." The eyes of the soul are the understanding and memory, which, daily meditating and embracing God, do draw the affection of the heart with them. And from hence he doth gather, that God doth deliver such a one from the baits of the devil, that is, He doth minister strength to him, whereby he shall the less yield or faint under temptations; for presently he addeth, "And He shall pull my feet out of the snare." And this is that which the Holy Ghost doth, by the wise man, require of all. "In all thy ways think upon God, and He will direct thy goings in thy ways:" that is, in all thy actions, both inward and outward; t hy *footsteps*, that is, He will direct all thy affections, and the desires of thy soul, and all the exercises of thy body, to His glory, by enlightening and moving thee, that in all things thou shalt frame thy will according to His Heavenly will.

This also is a most worthy exercise, St. Bernard, being witness with St. Paul hath commended to his disciple Timothy, saying, "Exercise thyself in godliness, for bodily exercise is but little profitable; but godliness is expedient for all things."—For he would have this godliness to be a continual mindfulness of God, and a daily direction of our souls to the understanding of His will, and to love and embrace Him.

The Apostle here, as many holy men do affirm, calls the exercise of the body, mortifications and outward repentance, with which the body is punished for the reconciling us to God. For although these actions are excellent and healthful, yet notwithstanding, if they be compared with the exercise of the Divine Presence to be placed before our eyes, it may be said that the fruit of them is but small, and though they are profitable to some men, yet they are not so to all; for they are also to some sometimes hurtful. They may be convenient, if they level at a wholesome end, but if it be otherwise they do rather hinder; and therefore we determine, sometimes to moderate them, sometimes not to use them at all. But this Heavenly exercise is most profitable to all men, of what state soever, both because it is spiritual and existing in the soul, and also, because herein is true godliness.

Here is God's worship exercised, which doth chiefly consist in the inward deeds of faith, hope, and charity; for what is it else to behold God as present, but to lift up our hearts to Him, to believe in Him, to love Him, and to sigh after Him with mourning? This holy exercise, I say, the Scriptures do often repeat in those places wherein they do commend it; that is, that we may pray without ceasing,* and that we may watch in our prayers.† For truly our thoughts and desires are voices and

* Ecclus. xviii. 22. Luke xxi. 36. † 2 Thess. i. 11

words with which our soul doth speak, and therefore, so often as we, meditating of God as being present, do direct or lift up our cogitations and petitions to Him, it may be truly said, that we do pray; and if we do it very often, or most often, it may be most rightly said, that we pray always, and without ceasing. For although in the Holy Scriptures the vocal prayer is also commanded to us, even as truly it is commanded principally unto the ministers of the Church, notwithstanding in the places above-mentioned, the prayer of the mind, which is only in the heart, is also praised.

The vocal prayer hath times and certain hours limited by the Church, in which space of time the aforesaid prayer is used; but the prayer of the mind hath not so, it doth comprehend all time and place, for at all times, and in all places, we may have God present, and we may direct our prayers and petitions to Him. For what a man doth often, and as it were ordinarily, in the usual manner of speech, he is said to do it always. And in this sense the holy and expert men have satisfied that advice or precept of praying continually.

Neither doth this attention to God hinder the function of outward works in the servants of God; yea, it doth greatly further them, that they may be done diligently and perfectly, according to an earnest desire and zeal which God doth participate to men of this sort, who are busied as in His sight.

Yea, for His great mercies' sake He doth impart to some so admirable and notable gifts of His grace, that not only without labour and difficulty, but also with exceeding great pleasure and facility, they may have their hearts affectuously conjoined and united to God.

Wherefore with a great and cheerful mind, every one ought to apply himself unto this holy exercise, and he shall easily understand how ready God is to stay as present with us; as often as it shall please Him to behold us, let us speak to Him, and familiarly talk with Him. From whence doth proceed such aids and helps that what doth seem hard to the strength of nature, yea, impossible, it may be made most easy and pleasant to any one.

That one may have access to an earthly king, and that he may speak and entreat with him, is very hard, neither may it be obtained, but by the favour and grace of many; yea, there is need of the labour and service of many years, before they can come to familiar acquaintance with the king; but God, although He is endued with infinite Majesty and Glory, He is always prepared in every hour and moment to admit us into His sight, that we may lift up the eyes of our minds to Him, to behold His beauty and greatness, to desire His glory, to love His goodness, taste His sweetness, in being busied familiarly with Him, and in requiring some grace of Him. Neither only is he pre-

pared to do this, but He doth also wish and invite us with most great rewards propounded of His favour and glory, that we may do so. Neither doth He bid some only, and those which excel in holiness, as there have been many ancient holy men, who have given themselves wholly day and night to Divine service, but also all the faithful, as many as with a pure heart do seek the honour of God, and to serve Him.

O how devoutly and religiously do they perform their duty who desire and carefully seek such a good, who do not neglect such an honourable exercise, whereby they may have God always present, and continually enjoy His company! They may truly fear, whosoever refuse in this life to use this so Heavenly a benefit, that in the hour of death the gate will be shut, as to the ungrateful, and to them that neglect the clear sight and contemplation of God as being present, which then shall be open only to just and blessed men.

## CHAPTER LXXV.

OF THE EXCEEDING GREAT FRUITS OF THIS DIVINE EXERCISE; AND FIRST OF ALL, OF THE FRUIT OF PURENESS OF MIND.

NOW to the intent that we may be stirred up to frequent this Holy Exercise with more earnestness, let us consider what effects it worketh in the mind, and, that it may take the deeper impression, let us set before us some examples. Amongst virtues and the gifts of God, which are had in price with men of God, "pureness of heart" doth challenge the first place, as that which doth yield habitation or dwelling to the Divine Majesty: hence it is said, "He that loveth pureness of heart, the King shall be his friend;"* that is, God, the King of Heaven and earth. This pureness we shall attain and preserve, if we behold God ever present with the eye of our mind: if it be otherwise, and if man forget God, neglect to consider that he is seen of Him, that he doth live, and do all things before Him; the next thing is, that having the reins loosed, he by and by falls into

* Proverbs xxii. 11.

sin, and continueth therein, according to that of the Psalm, "God is not in his sight, therefore his ways are become wicked."*

For, as the very thought, so the inordinate desire of earthly things doth defile the soul by sin, and doth put God out of the same; so in this exercise, because man doth place his cogitations on God, and after cogitations godly affections do succeed, it comes to pass that the mind, by little and little, is taken away from the love of earthly and transitory things, and by this means is purged and renewed. St. Bernard found this by experience in himself, as he humbly confesseth, out of Divine inspiration, for the edifying of others, saying, "You ask, whereas the ways of God are hard to be found out, how I come to know them? It is quick and lively, as soon as the Divine Presence comes into my mind, it awakens my sleepy soul; it stirreth up, it moves, it softens, it wounds my heart, which is hard, stony, and ill-affected; it beginneth also to pull up, destroy, build, plant, water that which was dry, enlighten that which was dark, open that which was shut, enflame that which was cold, and also to righten that which was wrong, to make plain that which is rough, so that my soul doth now bless God, and all that is within me doth give praise unto His Holy name." All this saith St. Bernard, whereby he doth testify

* Psalm x. 4, 5.

what wonderful things God wrought in him, when he had Him present in his mind.

Neither doth the Divine Presence effect this only in the servants of God, but also it brings to pass in great sinners, that their hearts be purged from the contagion of sin. For being hereby admonished, they do lift up their heads from the bed of sin, and being moreover assisted with Divine light, they do consider themselves to be in the sight of God, Who is Judge both of quick and dead, Who, being present, doth see as often as they offend. Hence, from being stricken with shame and horror, they dare not any more commit wickedness, but wonder at their former blindness, that so rashly and boldly, as if no God or judge had seen them, they ran headlong into all evil.

It is storied of that infamous harlot Thais, to whom when Paphantius, a holy man, came into a secret and solitary place, that she said unto him, "Here can I not be seen but of God only, or of the devil." To whom Paphantius answered, "Go too then, if God see thee with most pure eyes, with what forehead darest thou sin in His sight?" Forthwith, saith the story, the beam of Heavenly Light cleared her mind; whereupon she began with great shame, yea with capital hatred, to detest her former wicked life: insomuch that in the midst of the city of Alexandria she burnt all those things which she had gathered together by her sin-

ful trade and vicious course of life, and betook herself unto a straight and penitent manner of living, sequestering herself from the world, for the space of three years until she died.

The same happened to another by the means of the holy Ephraim, who coming to a sinful woman, asked her if she durst commit her wonted sins in the midst of the city of Edessa, who answered, "I dare not, for shame doth forbid me to commit these things in the sight of men." To whom Ephraim said, "Know this, that though thou committest evil in the most secret place, and remote from the eyes of men, yet thou art seen of God, Who is everywhere present; if, therefore, shame do deter thee from sinning, and the fear of men, much more should the fear of God do the same, Who doth punish the shameless sinners with the pains of hell." Which admonition did so terrify her with sorrow for her sin, that forthwith she took herself to a penitent course of life.

These are the excellent effects of the Divine Presence, when a man doth set the same seriously before his eyes; for with what countenance dare he commit so foul an act, as some sin is before God, considering how infinitely He hateth sin, and punisheth wickedness with great severity, Who will not leave sin unpunished, either in this life, or in the life to come? St. Augustine considering this, saith, "Lord, when I call to mind that

Thou observest my ways, and hast a watch over me day and night, and spiest out all my steps, as if, forgetful of all Thy other creatures, Thou didst only mark me, I am suddenly confounded with fear and shame, because there is a great necessity laid upon me of living uprightly and well, because we do all things in the sight of a Judge that seeth all things." Hitherto St. Augustine; whereby we understand how great force a consideration of the Divine Presence hath, to make us beware of sin.

## CHAPTER LXXVI.

HOW, BY THE CONTEMPLATION OF THE DIVINE PRESENCE, TEMPTATION MAY BE OVERCOME, AND PESEVERANCE IN VIRTUE ATTAINED.

THE contemplation of the Divine Presence doth not only make us that we repent of sins committed, but also that we fall not into them again; for while we place God as beholding Him always present, and lift up our heart unto Him, there is stirred up in our minds a certain desire of vanquishing our ghostly enemies. Neither is the Divine aid and assistance hereunto wanting. Wicked elders insulted over Susanna, that chaste and innocent woman, threatening her death, unless she consented unto their sinful desires; let us see by what way or means she resisted this temptation, to wit, she considered that she stood in the sight of God, Whom she so placed before her eyes, that raising up her mind against temptation, she chose rather to lose the reputation of her family, than to consent to sin, for thus she answered, "I am in a great straight, if I do this thing death is present; if I do not, I cannot escape your

hands: it is better for me not doing it, to fall into your hands, than to sin in the sight of the Lord." O worthy saying, and worthy to be used in every temptation of the devil and the world, "I will rather endure death than sin in the sight of God."

The valiant soldier, when in warlike conflict he considereth the eyes of the emperor or captain to be upon him, he fighteth more courageously; for he knoweth that it is in the power of the emperor or captain after the victory obtained to distribute the spoils, and reward the well-deserving. What should not the soldier of Christ do in this daily combat with the devil, the world, and the flesh, seeing the eyes of the Divine Majesty cast upon him, remembering the eternal rewards, while he knoweth, that in the very conflict, Divine assistance will not fail him?

The verity of this, daily experience doth confirm; for if it happen that some servant of God (occasion being offered of wrath and anger) to be unmindful of the Divine Godhead, neither ordinarily to lift up his heart to God, we see that he doth easily slip or fall into word of impatience, or at least to have some perverse cogitations in his mind; but if he have his heart erected to God, and refer all his pious desires to Him, he is soon at quiet, neither doth his mind give place to turbulent perturbations.

Palladius visiting his friend Diocles, amongst

other documents received from him, being a holy man, this was one; "A man," saith he, "without the contemplation of the Divine Presence, is either a devil or a beast: a beast, if he give place to the temptations of the flesh, and carnal delights; a devil, if to wrath, arrogancy and the like." When Palladius asked him by what means a man might have his soul quiet and always fixed upon God, he answered, "So often as the mind is occupied in any godly cogitations which doth direct to God, then it is fixed with God: but when it forgetteth God, then it becomes either a devil or a beast." This he understood to be done not only when a man falleth into any great or capital sin, but also into some lighter sins, whereby he is made like either a devil or a beast. Wherefore the servant of God may in no case neglect at any time the Divine presence, especially when occasions are offered of wrath, impatience, pride, unlawful desires, and such others. He may not, I say, at any time neglect with watchfulness to lift up his mind to God, to crave by prayer His daily assistance.

## CHAPTER LXXVII.

HOW, BY THIS EXERCISE OF THE DIVINE PRESENCE STABILITY OF HEART, THE PERFECTION OF VIRTUES, AND OUTWARD CLEANNESS, ARE ATTAINED.

AMONGST those excellent good things which are got by this Holy exercise, stability of heart is numbered to be one: for first of all it is manifest that man was created for this end, that even in this life he should be firmly joined unto God by contemplation and love, and in the other Heavenly life by a clear vision. Now, after that he hath separated himself from God by sin, and hath turned unto the creatures, beginning to seek rest in them, (although that he had never found that he was made for them, or that any desire of them could satisfy him,) hence it is that his cogitations and desires do transport him sometimes this way, and sometimes that way, and so he falleth into great instability of heart; which the Prophet Jeremiah bewailed in this manner, "Je-

rusalem hath sinned a sin, therefore she is made unstable, erring from one place to another."*

And surely the soul vexed with divers desires of earthly things, is much troubled; hereof come the divisions of the heart, for so many divisions there are, as thoughts and studies to which it diverteth. Now in division things are destroyed and consumed, according to that of the Prophet, "Their heart is divided, therefore they shall perish."† Into this woful state do they chiefly fall who commit any capital sin, for they are pulled from the love of God, and are in soul dead by the death of sin into which they fall, that are too much addicted to the love of earthly things. Now these evils can by no more effectual antidote or preservative against evil be turned away, than by the Holy exercise of the Divine Presence. For when as our mind doth often elevate her cogitations and desires to God, conversing with Him, and entering as it were, a familiarity by little and little, it is settled and confirmed; for that it is drawn from things subject to instability, and united unto Him Who is not subject to any shadow of change. When the ship in the sea is tossed hither and thither, there is great danger that it dash not against a rock, the safest way is to cast some strong anchor: so when the mind of man, in the ocean of this world, is tossed with divers and

* Lamentations i. 8. † Hosea x. 2.

dangerous thoughts, the safest and surest way is to apply it, and fasten it to the anchor of the Divine Presence, that it may come to stability, and that constancy which is acceptable to God. Wherefore, that spoken by the Wise Man doth well befit the servant of God, "The godly man continueth in his wisdom as the sun, but the fool is changed as the moon."*

Now this remembrance of God, or Divine Presence, doth not only compose and order the inward man, but also the outward. For as the servant of some great personage is by no means better contained within the lists and limits of duty, or moved to carry himself soberly, than if he understand he is beheld of his lord and diligently observed in his actions: so the servant of God is by no means more effectually retained within the actions of piety, than if he remember that he is always conversant in the sight of God, as the stars of Heaven in presence of the sun, from whom they receive their light. Wherefore the Wise Man said well, "Blessed is the man that continueth in wisdom and thinketh of the beholding of God."†

* Ecclesiasticus xxvii. 11. † Ibid. xiv. 20.

## CHAPTER LXXVIII.

### HOW THIS EXERCISE OF THE DIVINE PRESENCE DOTH BRING SPIRITUAL COMFORT.

FOR the continuance of the race of a spiritual life, spiritual joy is a matter of no small moment, which is felt by the servants of God, and had in price. This truly wholesome and spiritual good is principally procured and kept by the exercise of the Divine Presence. For even as he who attempteth any great and dangerous enterprise, is marvellously refreshed, if any object or sight be offered whereby he may be delivered from his danger; or, if he chance to see some good friend whom he hath not seen for many years, is wonderfully comforted; so the soul of the servant of God, when it considereth with how many dangers it is compassed, when it once turneth the eyes of the mind to God, who is endowed with goodness, and ready to give help, is marvellously comforted and refreshed.

King Josiah, because he promoted the Divine Worship, and bestowed many benefits upon the people of God, he hath left behind him a joyful re-

membrance of his name. "The remembrance of Josiah is like a sweet ointment."* St. Bernard confesseth of himself, that so soon as he entered a religious course of life, he much rejoiced in the presence of Heavenly minded men. If the sight and memory of a just man be joyful, what shall the remembrance of God be? Nay, what shall His Presence be? in Whom we may behold infinite beauty and other perfections. Judas Maccabeus entering into a warlike attempt, was wonderfully comforted by the Presence of God, Whom he was persuaded to be present to assist him; these are the fruits of this Holy exercise.

Therefore let the servant of God endeavour this exercise at every time and place; and so often as he waketh in the night, let him forthwith lift up the eyes of his mind, to behold the Divine Majesty present; let him do the same when he riseth early out of his bed. If he pass through public ways, casting his eyes modestly unto the ground, let him raise up his spiritual eyes to God. When he hath conference with men, or is conversant in affairs, let him fasten one eye of consideration upon his affairs now in hand, and let him lift up the other to God, requiring His help.

If he be fallen into some grievous disease, so that he cannot perform his accustomed task of devotion, let him not be grieved, but instead thereof,

* Ecclesiasticus xlix. 1.

let him lift up his heart to God, invoking Him, and laying before Him his desires, and with this only labour, let him be content and quiet, for by so doing he shall supply other duties. Thus did the Prophet David: "Thy name, O Lord, and remembrance is in the desire of my soul. My soul hath longed for Thee in the night season, and with my spirit have I early awaked unto Thee."

## CHAPTER LXXIX.

### BY WHAT MEANS THIS GIFT OF HAVING GOD PRESENT IN OUR ACTIONS IS TO BE HAD.

HITHERTO we have considered the excellent fruits of this Divine exercise, now it remains that we know the means how this may be attained: of which, the first is, that we crave the same of God, of Whom cometh every good and perfect gift. For as from Christ our Saviour all other helps unto salvation do proceed and come, so this, beseeching Him humbly by the infinite mercy and merits of His Passion, that we may always remember Him, and have our hearts lifted up unto Him; and there is no doubt but He will grant our requests, if, with assured faith, and lively desire, we ask this of Him.

Another means to have God present may be if we use some signs, by the sight whereof we be brought to remember God; as the placing of some sentence in that part of the house wherein we are most conversant; as thus, "Sin not, because God

seeth thee."* Or that of the Wise man, "The eyes of the Lord are in every place, beholding the good and evil."† Or that of David, "I had ever God in my sight."‡ Or that of Tobit to his son, "All the days of thy life have God in thy mind."‖ By this or any other means, to stir up the remembrance of the Divine Presence, it is helpful to our dulness: and so much, briefly, of the first means of putting us in mind of the Divine Presence.

The second is a daily and particular examination of our consciences, whether or no we set God present in our actions; this examination is often to be had, wherein we require of our conscience every evening whether we have God present in our actions all the day: if we have so done, let us give Him thanks, for it is His gift and goodness, and let us beseech Him to continue the same; if it be otherwise, let us be sorrowful, and purpose to amend.

A third means is, to make this a matter of great care: for as he which hath a purpose to build a house, is full of thoughts how to bring it to pass, the very care thereof takes away both his sleep and meat: the same is often done about the education of children. No other ways falleth it out with him that is careful to set God ever present before the eyes of his mind.

The fourth means, and that which is above all,

* Job x. 14. † Proverbs xv. 3. ‡ Psalm xvi. 8. ‖ Tobit iv. 5.

to help to attain this Holy Exercise of the Presence of God, is the true love of God, which when it hath taken root in the heart of the servant of God, it by and by stirs him to direct his mind to God.

For this is the nature of love, to transport itself into the thing that is loved, whereby it may be united with it, and be made one with it. Hence it cometh to pass, that evermore we remember the thing we love, we think of it, we desire it, and do gladly reseive it according to that of our Saviour, "Where thy treasure is, there is twy heart also."* From hence it cometh that all the difficulty of this exercise is in the begiuning, until the soul come unto the great love of God; for as soon as love doth possess the heart, there is nothing more pleasant than the Presence of God.

* Luke xii. 34.

## CHAPTER LXXX.

HOW THIS EXERCISE, AND ALL OTHER GOOD AND GODLY ACTIONS, OUGHT NOT TO BE DEFERRED.

FIRST, that time is a thing most precious.

Secondly, for that man is not lord of the time, and it is therefore granted him of God to dispose well of it.

Thirdly, for that God doth take time from them that do neglect it.

Fourthly, for that we ought to labour in this and other holy exercises while we have time.

Fifthly, how we may proceed to redeem the time.

Of the first of these we are to consider first of all, that time is precious by that of the Angel, "Time shall be no more;"* meaning a precious opportunity of providing for an estate to come; which also showeth that God vouchsafeth us a great grace in granting us this time. King David was ever in fear of making less time, in that he said, "Mine eyes prevent the night watches."† "Arise, arise, quickly," saith St. Bernard, "O Chris-

* Rev. x. 6. † Psalm cxix. 125.

tian, be ashamed that the sun should prevent thee." The holy men of God, knowing how precious time was, and of such value that it could not be valued, did ever frugally spend the same. "O," saith St. Bernard, "what is more dear, more to be loved, more profitable than time? nothing more worthy and yet nothing more contemned."

The days of salvation pass away, no man perceiving it; they fly away without hope of return. I beseech you, brethren, contemn not the time, or little hour which God hath given you to prepare. Everlasting glory is precious, that is precious a little whereof is worth great treasure: of this nature is time. Of the second, that man is lord of the time, and that it is therefore granted him of God to dispose well of it. Concerning earthly possessions, we cannot call them properly ours, according to that of the Apostle, *Dcum tempus habemus*, "while we have time."* Now we are withal to consider that this *momentum temporis*, for it is but a moment compared to eternity, that is, I say, *momentum magni momenti*, "a moment of great moment," granted us not to be wasted in vain, much less in sinful delights. A man ought not to cast his temporal goods into the sea, but to spend them in all good and godly uses, answerable to that of the forenamed Apostle, proceeding in this manner, "While we have time, let us do good."

* Gal. vi. 10.

The Prophet David saith, *Dum hodie appellatur*, "while it is called to-day."* In the Gospel, the kingdom of heaven is compared to certain who receive their master's treasures upon an account, and to occupy it until his coming. "The time," saith St. Jerome, "which is bestowed upon unprofitable or idle delights, is lost and doth perish as if it never had been." It is reported of Vespasian, that when he had passed a day without benefiting others, he would say to his friends, "Friends, I have lost a day." Wherefore seeing that time is granted us to dispose well of our future condition, let not any hour pass without fruit.

Of the third, to call to mind how God will take time from them that do neglect it, we have a manifest warrant by that in the Revelations, "If thou watch not, I will come upon thee as a thief."† Where God exhorteth first, to watch; secondly, he threatenth surprising them that are slothful, and spoiling them of that which ought to be most precious, to wit, time; for time is, as it were, treasure in the house of a sinner, which treasure, if we well preserve, we may make a happy merchandise for the world to come; and is also likened to the bird, that at every flight loseth a feather.

Of the fourth, we may consider how we are to labour in this and other holy exercises, while we have time. "Whatsoever thy hand is able to do,"

* Psalm xcv. 8. † Rev. iii. 3.

saith the Wise Man, "do it instantly."* Joseph, in the seven years of plenty, provided for the years of dearth; Noah built an ark while the weather was fair; the wise virgins provided oil before the market was done.

Of the fifth, we are last of all to consider how we may proceed to redeem the time. Time is said to be captive, when we use it contrary to the mind of the Giver; but it is redeemed or set at liberty when we use it to fulfil His will, and keep His commandments. The means of redeeming the time is laid down by that of the Apostle, "As men have given their members servants to unrighteousness, so let them give them to be servants of righteousness;"† of evil, let them become good; of cruel, gentle; of negligent, watchful; in a word, to spend the rest of their lives as that they be pure and holy, that so at the last they may attain everlasting glory: which God grant, for Christ's sake. Amen.

A BRIEF FORM OF COMMENDING ONESELF TO GOD.

Into the hands of Thine ineffable mercy, O Lord, I commend my soul, my body, my senses, my speech, my counsel, my wit, my thoughts, my works, and deeds; all the necessities of my soul and body, my coming in, my going forth, my faith

* Prov. iii. 27. † Rom. vi. 19.

and conversation, my course and end of my life, the day and hour of my departure, my death, my rest, my resurrection with Thy saints and elect for ever. Amen.

Lord grant me a hatred of evils past, a contempt of sinful delights present, a desire of true delights for the time to come: grant me also, I beseech thee, the removing of occasions of evil, the soundness of affection to refuse, and power to resist my ghostly enemy, that he never say, I have prevailed against him.

Omnipotent, and O merciful God, Who didst add to the life of king Hezekiah fifteen years, when he prayed unto Thee weeping, grant me, Thy unworthy servant, so much space before the day of my death, that I may bewail all my sins, and by Thy grace attain remission of them, by Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.

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